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CLEVELAND :

A TALE

OF

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

*Wm. Herman Galtshore*

"Mark well her bulwarks."

LONDON :

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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# CLEVELAND.

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## CHAPTER I.

HENRY CLEVELAND was the only son of a gentleman of ancient family, possessed of a small property in the South of England. His mother, a lady of Irish extraction, had resided in London since the death of her husband, which occurred when her son was sixteen.

The noble, though untitled family of Cleveland, had continued faithful to the Church of Rome at the time of the Reformation. The gallant forefathers of Henry Cleveland remained in proud seclusion during the years of the reign of Henry and Elizabeth. They came forth with the royalist party of the Revolution. Faithful among the faithless, they followed with truth and loyalty the fallen and discrowned line of Stuart—they welcomed with joy the apparent resurrection of a lost and dying

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cause—and when the Hanoverian succession was fairly established, and the only direct descendant of the Stuart family had expired—they felt that the last star had indeed set, and that the glory was departed.

Many of the family, disliking their social position at home, had left England and lived almost entirely on the Continent. It must be confessed there was some foundation for the proverbial name—"The proud Clevelands," which for generations had been awarded to them by their country neighbours.

It was a pride founded neither on rank nor riches, for the family was neither titled nor wealthy, but it was universally allowed that they "thought a great deal of themselves." It was an hereditary passion, the pride of the Clevelands. They had considered themselves, for generations back, the emblem of unfortunate loyalty. There is no devotion so romantic as this—no heroism more touching—especially when its indulgence endangers the life and lands of the faithful follower. And it had done both in the case of the Clevelands.

Not less firm had they been in their allegiance to the Church they clung to. Several of the family had entered the priesthood, and shed a lustre over the field they had chosen for the exertion of their powers and talents.

Influenced by this remembrance, Henry Cleveland took holy orders, and gave up all the energies of an ardent heart and powerful mind to the service of the Church which he believed to be the only ark wherein the souls of men could be saved.

Besides gratifying thus an honest wish to be useful, he secured by this means the opportunity of indulging, more than he imagined, the natural tendency to a romantic ambition and a love of personal influence over others, which was very strong within him.

Armed with the weapons of his Church, he felt, that he was entitled to assume and to keep the authority of a superior over those beneath his care. Devoted in heart and soul to the cause he served with sincere anxiety, Cleveland clung more and more, as years rolled on, to the Mother Church which he believed to be "the perfection of beauty," the future "joy of the whole earth;" and he worshipped her accordingly with almost a blind idolatry.

During his early years, undoubtedly, Cleveland had been ambitious of secular distinction; but these dreams had faded and vanished long before the noon of his day, for his father's extravagance had been such, that some years after his death the property of Cleveland was sold; and thus, with few friends to help him on, he could not hope

to make his way in any of the professions that otherwise he might have chosen. Besides, he felt that his religion rendered him an object of suspicion to the illiberal, at least; and Cleveland was too proud to enter into the contest of life under such disadvantages.

It has been stated that his friends were few in number; and this was easily accounted for. His father and his grandfather principally lived abroad—he himself had been educated on the Continent, and when he returned to England on the breaking out of the last war he found his family living in obscurity, drowned in debt, and without a hope of extricating themselves from this position by any other means than through their own exertions.

At this time, Cleveland became acquainted with an Irish connexion of his mother, of the name of Rossmore. The latter took the most affectionate interest in Cleveland. He urged him to turn all his time and thoughts to the service of the Church. He pointed out the nobleness of that sacred ambition, the chances of extended usefulness, great influence, and the acquisition of a power, limited, perhaps, but still of the deepest and most imposing character. He then insisted on the wisdom of seeking for these opportunities, not in Britain, at least, in the first instance.

"Go," he said, the night before he parted with Cleveland, in consequence of his own proposed journey to Paris, "Go to the Continent; there is the only field at present, I think, open to you. You have foreign connexions; I will do what I can for you. Here, manacled by the superstitious intolerance and bigotry of all around, there is little to hope for—to look to; but, '*le bon temps viendra.*' The seeds of the Reformation, scattered by the rebellious winds on this land, were originally sent forth by Germany. See the fruits! The trunk of the tree is withered, the branches and leaves must share its fate. The Church, *our* Church, Cleveland—let us glory in the appropriation—still rides on the waves of this troublesome world. The storm has swept over our ark; but it shall, it must, ride triumphant at the last. Take courage, then; exert yourself; 'mark well her bulwarks—tell the towers thereof.' I need not impress on you, Cleveland, '*Her foundations are on the holy hills.*'"

Not long after Rossmore's departure, Cleveland's father died. His mother declared her intention of living in London. A house in a quiet, dim street, and the company of an obedient and taciturn widow-lady, were enjoyments quite equal to her capacities. She was rather disposed to hypochondria and ill-humour, and being a

woman of no mind and very little feeling, Cleveland felt that the best thing to be done was to provide a suitable home for her, which he was enabled to do by selling his estate, and then to follow Rossmore's advice with respect to himself.

Accordingly, he left England in the autumn of the year 1800, and proceeded to Belgium. He travelled through the more peaceful parts of the Continent for some little time. He then took orders, and devoting himself to the duties of his profession, rose in the estimation of all who knew him, and became in one of the large cities of Belgium, where for some years he dwelt, an honoured member of the Church, an active and zealous promoter of religion, and one of the leading stars of the priesthood.

## CHAPTER II.

IN the year 1815, the cessation of hostilities threw open the Continent as a vast, long-closed pleasure-ground, to the curiosity and interest of the English public. Numbers crowded to visit France, Germany, or Italy, and, amongst them, a young gentleman of the name of Milner, who in due time extended his short tour over the northern parts of Europe.

Cecil Milner was the son of a Devonshire clergyman. Educated for the Church of England, he had prepared himself to enter on its duties with all the fervour of an honest and conscientious heart. He was clever, amiable, of gentle manners, and of a style of beauty as uncommon as it was picturesque — equally interesting from its expression as its regularity.

His prospects in life were good: first as his father's curate, then as his successor to the vicarage of Ellesmere. In that lovely and secluded home he hoped to spend years of usefulness and calm contentment, should



God permit it to be so. From his earliest youth the heart of Milner had been fixed on the Ministry, as the profession in which his tastes and convictions united. Fondly attached to the faith of his fathers, he trusted that he might be enabled to lead many in their way from the wilderness to the fold of the Great Shepherd.

Before leaving England, Milner had procured some letters of introduction to various persons abroad. One had been sent to him, through the intervention of a friend, by Rossmore. It was directed to Cleveland. The latter received it one evening while walking alone in the garden of the convent in which he resided. He immediately entered the room where Milner was waiting his approach.

Milner felt some curiosity as to this interview. He had heard many praises of the excellent Superior of Saint Etienne; and having rarely conversed with a priest of the Romish persuasion, he was glad to have an opportunity of doing so. His thoughts had been occupied enough about Cleveland, to sketch an ideal picture of the man, but as generally happens, the reality dispersed at once the vague vision.

Milner was, at first sight, most agreeably surprised at the manners and appearance of Cleveland.

He possessed a calmly expressive coun-

tenance, a commanding presence, polished manners, and a firm dignity, whose influence extended over all he conversed with for any length of time.

He greeted Milner with courteous ease. The latter soon felt the agreeable impression which he had received deepen into admiration, and, he almost confessed to himself, enchantment, as they continued to converse on different subjects. Cleveland at last rose, said he had business to attend to, and begged Milner to return the following morning, when he would shew him over the establishment, and point out some fine pictures in the chapel.

Early the next day, Milner was at the convent gates. He was admitted, and spent again a delightful hour with Cleveland. The latter saw the impression he had made, and felt more pleased than he would have cared to own. He valued his personal influence: he considered it as a talent committed to his charge, and had always resolved to use it to the best advantage. In the case of Milner, he succeeded completely to a certain extent.

One day he shewed his young English friend over the ——— establishment. He invited Milner to see the convent gardens, and they walked out together.

It was an evening in the early autumn. The last rays of a crimson sunset illumin-

ated the fading leaves with a golden hue ;  
and in the atmosphere was that chilly  
quietude which foretells the approach of the  
old age of the year,

“When Autumn, like a faint old man, sits down  
By the wayside weary.”

Cleveland and Milner walked on for a few minutes in silence, beneath an arcade of noble ilex trees. The solemn shade threw a pensive gloom over the heart of the happy and joyous Milner, for he was both happy and joyous then, and stood on the threshold of a sunlit scene. But his was an elasticity of spirit which augured no readiness on important subjects to yield without resistance old opinions to new theories.

As they walked slowly on together, the voices of the choristers reached their ears from a procession which was passing down one of the streets, at a little distance from the convent walls. The chant struck Milner immediately. He said, “What a beautiful effect that has!” It had a solemn and holy effect indeed, as it rose, swelled, and died, and left a melancholy charm behind it.

“Yes!” said Cleveland. “We have consecrated the Genius of Music and bound it to the altar, to do God service. That, I believe, you do not allow?”

"Oh! yes. Allow, certainly; but not insist on. At least, we do not think it of sufficient importance to meddle much with it. But I confess that I for one, regret that we have not retained the magnificent music of the grand old times."

"‘The grand old times!’ they were, indeed, as you say," replied Cleveland, warmly. Times glorious to remember—more glorious to renew."

"Renew! but how?" said Milner; "and, moreover, why?"

"Because," said Cleveland, "they were times when the glory had not departed from the sanctuary; when the *beauty* of holiness was allowed to hold a place in the heart of man. I can conceive—excuse me, Mr. Milner—nothing more sickening than the self-indulgence and idle life of a married priest, ‘the servant of a self-denying Master.’"

"They are not all either self-indulgent or idle," said Milner.

"Are you, then, so satisfied with the state of things around you in your own country? Look at your divisions, your schisms, your contempt of all other sects than your own. Where can you recognise the one indivisible Church, the one pearl of great price? See how you have split the truth into innumerable morsels with your hosts of Dissenters, each allowed to have a little bit, provided they preach not outrageous heresy."

"Better," replied Milner, "some divisions than compulsory unity. I see, of course, as clearly as you can, much carelessness; many individual cases of neglected opportunities and great worldly-mindedness; but——"

"It cannot be avoided," interrupted Cleveland, "it cannot be avoided where there is so much to tempt the usual run of men to live for themselves. But, forgive me if I seem to speak harshly, you are paying the penalty of your allegiance cast aside."

"I understand you," said Milner, smiling; "you will tell me that we have burst asunder the ties that bind the one indivisible Church, and as such, are little better than a band of rebels. I will tell you that we have come out from you, participating in your privileges—blessed, indeed, I hold them—and leaving behind us your corruptions only."

"Corruptions!" said Cleveland. "You speak very strongly: you will surely find as bad men among yourselves as among us."

"That I do not dispute," said Milner; "but such are sinning in spite of their convictions, their privileges, and their opportunities of doing better. I think that the creed to which you bend so fondly, I think that many of the doctrines which you advocate so warmly, are so many snares, in-

stead of aids, to the Christian on his course. You have often triumphantly pointed out the superior sanctity of many in the Roman Church. I allow that your Church contains, some of the most remarkable individual instances of superhuman holiness and purity which the world has ever seen; but I also believe, that as a church, she embraces within her limits the greatest mass of general abomination. The life of celibacy to which the clergy are condemned, seems to me, where it is least hurtful, to chill the natural affections which God has given, and thus to render impossible the union of our own happiness with his service and the holiness he requires therein."

"But you will allow," said Cleveland, after a short pause, "that there are instances of extreme holiness and purity among us, and such could not have flourished equally well in a situation where fewer means are used to raise, exalt, and purify."

"I do not say that," answered Milner; "our strength is made perfect in weakness. Of that we cannot judge. Trusting too much to *the means* of raising our souls on high, is to act somewhat on the plan of the men of old,—'We will build a tower, whose top shall reach unto Heaven.'"

"Unto Heaven! yes!" said Cleveland: "that kingdom 'the violent take by force'—by prayer."

"By accepted prayers," said Milner, gently.

"Yes, you say well: and from what altar can prayer more safely ascend to the throne of God," said Cleveland, "than from that which has stood unshaken since it was first erected on Calvary?"

"The best of all altars, I believe, to be the sincere and single heart," replied Milner, "we do not require to wrap ourselves in any garment save one."

"He who had not on the wedding garment was cast into outer darkness," said Cleveland, thoughtfully.

"True, but that wedding garment, the faith of Christ," said Milner, earnestly, "is offered to all."

"To those who seek for it through the appointed means. That appointed channel is the Apostolic Church; beyond her bounds I do not see—I cannot see, how grace can be offered or accepted. The heathen of old was compelled, if he looked for safety, to seek it through the chosen people of God. The one Apostolic Church now stands in the position of that royal priesthood; and we may add, that her's also is a people zealous of good works.

"I will hope so," said Milner. "Yet I have always thought that many of your arguments and proud convictions were very Judaical: 'There is none beside me,' has

been a favourite argument since the days of the prophets in Israel."

"Well, go further back," continued Cleveland; "our religion is one of types and symbols. What can be more striking than that which assimilates the all-saving ark floating safely over the waters, with the one Church launched on the 'waves of this troublesome world,' open to all who will enter, refusing to none as long as they remain within her bosom entire salvation?"

"That is a perverted use of the type," said Milner. "It is not, I firmly believe, to the visible Church that we must look. 'The kingdom of God is within us.' Not to the members of one persuasion exclusively does Christ condescend to send his saving influence. Wherever the love of Christ is shed abroad, wherever an individual seeks in all humility to love justice and mercy, and walk humbly with his God, there is a member of the Church of Christ, there is one of those whom the Lord will remember in the day when he maketh up his jewels."

"There are times," said Cleveland, slowly, "when I could almost wish that I might believe that romantic toleration; but I can as soon believe in universal pardon."

"Then," said Milner, "you think there is no safety to be found without the shelter of your walls. It is a presumptuous doctrine to support."



"The presumption then of the Apostles," said Cleveland. "We openly assume the infallibility of our inspiration, and as inspired men, we require others to obey us for their good.

"And do you regret that there are no interesting melo-dramas of the Inquisition for the good of others?" said Milner, looking round with a smile.

Cleveland laughed; and then said, "I cannot but be of opinion that there is something very striking in the leading part the Church of old used to play in all countries, and on all occasions. When her arms stretched over all places to command, to crush, to crown, to destroy if necessary, it was worth while then being a door-keeper in the house of God!"

"I never understood that gratified ambition was a means of Christian perfection," said Milner.

"Not in the mere secular sense of the term," replied Cleveland; "but surely, Mr. Milner, no one better than yourself can understand the pleasure of acquiring influence, and guiding, and keeping the minds of men in the right and direct road!—a power which in your Reformed Church, so called, would not be tolerated for one moment."

"We persuade men," said Milner quietly.

"Yes! but remember," said Cleveland,

"the phrase is prefaced by St. Paul with the words, 'Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the Lord.' The terrors of the Church, the revealer of the word of God, are necessary for the guidance of the multitude."

"Do you mean by this to allude to the doctrine of infallibility?" said Milner.

"I cannot see how a Church can labour successfully unless it be infallible," said Cleveland.

"But," said Milner, "it is, over the mere ignorant that that doctrine holds the strongest sway; the more educated classes, in many instances, only half consent to it."

"They feel the assumption as a type, and as such revere it," said Cleveland.

"Then," said Milner, "the doctrine which is advanced for the ignorant who will believe, is hushed up or glosed over for those who will not; that is too chameleon-like a faith for me. You must own that in this we have the advantage over you. Our adherence to truth, which is single, is like the thing adhered to, single also."

"A careful and sagacious mother will vary her means of persuasion, so as to suit the various tempers of her children," said Cleveland: Do you suppose the Italian will, could ever be satisfied with the chill forms of Presbyterianism? Never! never! The hot heart and fervid imagination require to be nourished with a visible representa-

tion of the miraculous. I do not excuse or advocate any wilful deceptions, but the great end does sanctify the means. Corrupt and earthly man must be helped upwards. I cannot think the poor peasant is injured, who retires from a humble shrine convinced that he is made whole. It is a miracle on his faith and mind at least, and it makes him glorify God."

"Unfortunately," said Milner, "he worships the Virgin, or some other saint, not the true God in such a situation."

"Again, another gross misinterpretation," said Cleveland: "the saints are not worshipped as deities; but the act of reflecting on the perfections of those gone before is, beyond all question, profitable. The holy, the excellent, surely they shine as stars on the path which is open for our ascension—that way which the brightness of their glory still illuminates to lead us on?"

"No," said Milner, "there are no by-ways in prayer—there is one way, one truth, one life; I cannot think otherwise: and you will at least allow that it is a dangerous thing to let the multitude imagine what they please on the subject of miracles and saints' intercession."

"We do not allow them to imagine what they please," said Cleveland; "our care is especially bestowed on the weak. Where will you find more constant and careful

tending than in the shepherds of the one true Church."

"True, to our shame," said Milner. Involuntarily the thought rose into his mind, the children of this world are indeed wise in their generation, but he spoke not the words.

"And," continued Cleveland, "our means of instruction and comfort are peculiarly suited to the weakness and necessities of the nature which we seek to exalt. What other Church can *assure* the dying of their safety? what other Church can offer itself as a rock of ages for the sinking sinner to cling to in his last hour?"

"What other Church would *dare* to do so?" inquired Milner.

"We only use the privilege of the acknowledged Church of Christ," said Cleveland. "If we indeed believe in our salvation as belonging to the one true Church, we surely are entitled to proclaim pardon to those who seek it through the appointed means!"

"Yes," replied Milner. "But that is different from a positive individual assurance. It appears to me that your Church has put herself one step too near the eternal throne, and seeks to act the part of a visible second Providence."

"And has not this been the promise attached to the works of the true Apostolic Church," said Cleveland,— "To shew forth

his power, until the great day of her Lord's coming? Do you then believe that the Church was sent forth on her pilgrimage through a world lying in wickedness to tremble, to fall—to lie down never to rise again—the truth to depart from her, and herself to be split into a thousand miserable factions? I tell you, No. The Ancient of Days she is—great type of her Author and Finisher. In wrath he has hidden his face for a little time, but with everlasting kindness will he remember her. We have had sins to expiate, and heavily have they been avenged; still the incense of many prayers is rising daily, nightly, and hourly, for the restoration of our power and might. We wait the Lord's time, till He shall turn the hearts of the disobedient, and gather together the lost sheep into the fold they so unhappily left."

As he said the words a chime of bells rang out a summons to evening prayer, and Milner took his leave; he had many things to do, and he was to leave the city early in the morning on his way to England.

With Cleveland he exchanged a kind farewell, received his kind wishes, and departed. Cleveland watched his retreating form as it emerged from the dark shade under which they had conversed, and passed on through the changing lights and shadows of the dying day.

"Thus is our lot cast to each of us,"

thought Cleveland. "He goes forth to brighter scenes, I stay here, to watch from far the chances and changes in which I no longer care to join."

Milner reached England in safety, and entered on his duty as his father's curate.

In his busiest years he still remembered Cleveland, and would have felt glad to be assured of seeing him again.

### CHAPTER III.

IN the vicinity of the forest of Windsor is situated the small property of Elmswood, consisting of a noble garden, orchard, and two fields, once in the possession of Mrs. Trafford, a widow lady without any children.

A more beautiful and peaceful retreat she could not have chosen for her declining years than Elmswood; sweet sunny Elmswood, situated within half a mile of the "green retreats of Windsor," enjoying all the lovely seclusion of its sylvan solitude, and participating in all the comforts and conveniences necessary to an easy life for an elderly lady with a small income and few attendants.

The house was old fashioned, of that style of architecture which is much improved by a tapestry of ivy, jessamine, and every creeping plant that can be prevailed on to cling to the grey walls, and clothe them with verdure and flowers.

A bay-window looked out on a small

smooth lawn, and a hedge of evergreens beyond bounded the view, perfecting the vision of "a woodland nest." On one side stood a large yew-tree, the pride of the place, beneath whose dark branches, feathering to the ground, was placed a seat of rudely carved oak.

The garden was well stocked with flowers. The orchard attracted the eye in spring with its rich blush of blossom, in autumn with the plentiful supply of apples and pears that hung in abundance on the drooping branches. Behind the house lay the field, where fed the two cows kept by Mrs. Trafford. If you pass on through those pleasant meadows you reach a lane, a narrow lane, shaded by thick trees and hedge-rows. A sharp turn brings you to one of the humbler entrances to the Royal Forest.

The key kept by Mrs. Trafford for herself and her friends, admitted the bearer within the precincts; and when there he was free to choose the stroll that suited best his mood, by the green banks of Virginia Water, along the well-trimmed walks, or to wander to the wilder glades, through fern and moss, in the direction where then stood the oak of Herne the Hunter and other fathers of the forest.

At Elmswood Mrs. Trafford had resided for many years, when this tale commences in the year 1816.



Mrs. Trafford's maiden name had been Mortimer, her family was of Irish extraction, and in Ireland she had lived during the first years of her life. She had an only brother, Philip Mortimer, who at an early age had made a marriage highly displeasing to his friends, and the "friends" had followed the usual course in such cases, by taking little or no notice of him ever afterwards. He was many years younger than Mrs. Trafford, and, in spite of all his follies and imprudences, his sister remained a tender and faithful friend.

He sold his estate and went to India with his wife. He was unsuccessful in all his plans and experiments, and losing more money than he made, died at Calcutta in the latter part of the year 1815.

He left a widow and one child, a girl of eight years old, Helen Mortimer.

Mrs. Mortimer had been a Miss Cleveland, a daughter of an Irish gentleman, it may be said of no property. This was one of the reasons why the family of her husband openly reviled his choice; the other argument they made most frequent and impressive use of, was that Miss Cleveland was a Roman Catholic, and, moreover, a very earnest and bigoted Catholic; and such she remained during the years of her married life.

Mr. Mortimer himself was quite con-

tented, however, and was even in the habit of boasting of his mild tolerance; being, he said, under the solemn conviction that one religion 'was quite as good as another, provided its doctrines kept its disciples from inconvenient lives.

Mrs. Mortimer left India with failing health; a tempestuous voyage weakened her still more; she arrived in England destitute, helpless, friendless, and apparently dying.

She went first on arriving to some small and obscure lodging in London. It was the month of May: she did not believe she could live till autumn.

Her child's future fate filled her heart with heaviness and affectionate anxiety. She could leave her absolutely nothing. She had no means of providing for her independently of the only two relations she herself now possessed in England.

These were Mrs. Trafford, her sister-in-law; and Mrs. Cleveland, her aunt: the former of whom she had hardly ever seen, while the latter, though her nearest relative, was almost as much a stranger to her; for Mrs. Mortimer had lived in Ireland in her youth; she had married Mr. Mortimer in Dublin. Mrs. Cleveland had always resided in England, and she had only seen her two or three times in her life; the last interview took place several

years before, and did not offer many pleasing recollections, inasmuch as Mrs. Cleveland had taken that opportunity of expressing her extreme disapprobation of her niece's marriage, on account of Mr. Mortimer's Protestantism; she herself having a certain conviction that there was no salvation, and much temporal misery, without the pale of the Church of Rome, to which she belonged.

To one of these relatives, however, Mrs. Mortimer must address herself. She was daily becoming weaker; she must decide; and her faith pointed out Mrs. Cleveland as the one most likely to reply to her call on behalf of her child.

She summoned up her courage, her trust in God; she wrote,—she gave the letter to her faithful servant Moreton, an Englishwoman, who had been with her in India; and one evening in May, Moreton went to Mrs. Cleveland's house, accompanied by the child, who had begged to go out with her and enjoy the comparative liberty of a walk, after the long day spent in a hot and musty lodging.

They reached No. —, Queen Anne Street, and were admitted into a dim entrance-hall, by an elderly servant in plain clothes—a certain degree of familiar surliness shewed that he considered himself part of the family from long ser-

vice, and as such beyond the reach of vulgar censure.

Moreton begged to be admitted into the presence of Mrs. Cleveland; she wished to deliver the message she was charged with herself.

“Mrs. Cleveland is in her own sitting-room—she has been but poorly; but you can come up if you like.”

Moreton proceeded up stairs, holding the hand of her little charge. They were left on the landing-place for a few minutes, while the servant went into the room to communicate their wishes to Mrs. Cleveland.

There was a parley of several moments—words could not be distinguished; but one voice answered in smothered tones, as from the depths of a very easy chair. At last the man returned, and they were admitted into the presence of the lady of the house.

The blinds were drawn down, there was no light in the room; it was extremely hot and unutterably dismal. A large form in a loose black silk dress reposed in an arm-chair, a footstool of faded worsted-work at her feet; at her side an old-fashioned work-table, on her lap a piece of imbecile netting, and on her head a heavily frilled night-cap—for Mrs. Cleveland was in the state her servant had described as “poorly.” There was no cause, however, for immediate

anxiety, as she had remained in that condition for fully five-and-twenty years.

The first words she gave vent to were—"Lights, Hardy;" and then taking the letter from Moreton's hand she broke the seal, fumbled for her glasses, and muttered "Can't see."

Moreton ventured to speak,—

"My mistress, Mrs. Mortimer, begged me to bring an answer, if convenient—quite convenient for you to give one." She paused.

"What!" said Mrs. Cleveland.

Lights now came in, borne on a tray by Hardy, and Moreton had an opportunity of observing one of the most hopeless faces in which to trace a sympathy or a feeling. Mrs. Cleveland opened the folded sheet, looked for a moment on it, made one more unavailing struggle to find her glasses, and at last said to Hardy as he left the room,—

"Send Mrs. Barton here."

There was another pause. At last Mrs. Cleveland's curiosity shewed signs of life, and she said, with a look of some excitement,—

"Who are you?"

Before Moreton answered another person entered the room, and quietly sat down beside Mrs. Cleveland. She seemed to know what was required, took the letter,

and glanced over the contents. Before beginning to read she looked carelessly over the top of the paper and said to Moreton,—

“You had better sit down.”

She obeyed, and Helen Mortimer stood beside her while her mother’s petition in her behalf was read aloud.

Mrs. Cleveland composed herself to listen, and her companion proceeded as follows :—

“I do not know how to address you with any of the common-place beginnings for asking a small favour ; I tell you at once, that what I have to ask is the greatest blessing you can bestow or I can receive. You may remember me many years ago, a girl much younger than yourself, and one of your near connexions,—Louisa Cleveland. I married, you will recollect, Henry Mortimer——”

“Oh ! I know now,” escaped from Mrs. Cleveland ; her companion continued,—

“We went to India. Eighteen months ago I lost my husband ; at his death I was left in poverty—great poverty. I returned to England with my only child ; she is now eight years old. My health has failed ; I have not the smallest expectation of recovering it in any degree. I am dying, and I now write to implore you—for the love of God, and by all that *we hold* sacred—to give my child a home in your house—a

place in your family. I have no claim upon you ; you may, without positive injustice, reject my prayer : but I beseech you take my misery into your merciful consideration. You may bring up my child to work as a governess, yes, even as a village teacher,—but I charge you to bring her up in the faith, the true unalterable faith, in which we ourselves have lived, and I trust will die.

“I have used few words in my application ; in Heaven I trust, on God I rely—He will do as seemeth to him best. Forgive the boldness that seeks your charity in the sense of the need that has caused it.

“I am, Mrs. Cleveland,

“Yours faithfully,

“LOUISA MORTIMER.”

“Is that all?” said Mrs. Cleveland, after her companion had finished reading, and had commenced examining the seal.

“Yes ; there’s nothing more.” She rose and took hold of the child’s hand and inquired what her name was, and if she was “a good child?”

“I was naughty on Sunday, but I am good to-day,” answered the little girl, in a tone of self-approbation.

“Come and speak to Mrs. Cleveland, my dear ;” and the child was led to the side of the arm-chair. The old lady took the little

chubby hand in hers, and gave it one of those vague, unmeaning wags, which are totally inexpressive of welcome.

"Well, good night, my dear," she said, after some hesitation. "I will send an answer in the course of to-morrow. I will beg Mrs. Barton to write, or, perhaps, to go in the afternoon. Where do you all live?" she added, suddenly lifting her head, as if by an unexpected effort she had remembered the necessity of inquiring their address, in case she wished to find them out.

"No. — Street," said Moreton; "but my mistress has surely put our direction on her letter?"

"Yes, here it is," said the companion, once more unfolding Mrs. Mortimer's letter.

"Good night, little—little girl," was Mrs. Cleveland's parting salutation. The door closed upon them—down the stairs they went. Hardy sped them on their way across the dingy hall, and the fresh air and lamp-lit streets were a positive relief after the dismal atmosphere they had just quitted.

"I am very glad to be out of doors again," observed the child, and she performed a joyous little prance at the side of Moreton.

"Quiet, my dear," said the attendant. Her heart was heavy and sad; on Mrs.



Cleveland's face she had read no good news to communicate to Mrs. Mortimer.

"I don't think Mrs. Cleveland pretty; do you?" said the child, continuing to chatter as they walked along.

"She is an old lady now, my dear," said Moreton, cautiously.

The little girl continued to speak frankly on all she had seen and observed, with the amusing shrewdness of a clever child; commented on the peculiarities of Mrs. Cleveland; but at last charitably concluded by making for her the apology usually made for every species of ill-manners in companions of her own age, namely, that she supposed she was "very shy."

It was late when they reached home; the little girl, tired with her walk, soon went to bed. Moreton was left alone with her unfortunate mistress, and openly told her all she feared from the coldness of Mrs. Cleveland's reception.

Mrs. Mortimer melted into tears, she clasped her hands, but spoke not for long.

Moreton, after a long silence, ventured to mention the name of Mrs. Trafford.

"No! no! not there; she would not listen to me—not she: why should she?"

"My dear mistress, you cannot tell. Suffer yourself to be persuaded to write to her; only beg her to come and see you—speak to you. Shew her your darling child; you

cannot tell what her heart will feel; it may be as kind and tender as those of others are cold."

Mrs. Mortimer was still silent. At last, after some time spent in deep thought, she said, "I will write." That night she did so; the letter was despatched to Elmswood, Windsor, the following day, which was Wednesday.

On Thursday morning Mrs. Mortimer was much worse; in the evening Mrs. Trafford arrived. She was shocked to find how ill her unfortunate relative was, now evidently sinking fast. Mrs. Trafford was admitted to see her soon after she came; the interview was not a long one.

Mrs. Mortimer lay almost in the last agonies, in her right hand she clasped an ebony crucifix; there was the strong devotion of a fervent believer in her last words and dying looks.

She recommended her orphan child to Mrs. Trafford; she told her she would wish to have placed that child in one of the sacred asylums of the Church—but so young! so helpless! She could not tell what might be her own wishes in future years, should she live. She implored Mrs. Trafford to bring her up according to the faith in which she was baptised.

Mrs. Trafford said she was no Catholic.

"No, but you are a Christian! All I ask

is, that you will not insist on her forsaking the faith, to which she is pledged,—you will not insist on her attending your public worship, you will allow her the free use of the books, the prayers, I leave for her; they have lightened the way of a pilgrimage now near its end! May the Holy Spirit illuminate her path! This you will promise?”

“I will do all I can, indeed, of what you wish! Pray do not fret yourself so, you are so weak.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Mortimer, “weak indeed! It is now time to prepare to cross the Jordan.”

She was silent, then said,—“Hereafter you may find a rich blessing in what you now do. You will allow my child to go occasionally to Mrs. Cleveland’s house, if she will receive her. Her son is now abroad; he is a good and earnest man. Should he return to this country you will allow him to see my Helen; to take any charge of her he will charitably consent to undertake?”

“Of course, he is a near relation; that is quite proper,” said Mrs. Trafford. She soon after left her sister-in-law’s side. Her confessor came, the hour of absolution and death followed each other closely. She died a faithful believer in the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church.

Before the coffin was closed, the child

Helen was taken by Mrs. Trafford to see once more the face of her mother. The little girl shewed none of the usual signs of terror, but the impression was not less deep. It flung on her heart an ineffaceable impression of most awful solemnity. She repeated a prayer and soon left the room, holding the hand of Moreton, from whom she had now to part.

Mrs. Trafford could not afford to engage an additional servant, and the residue of Helen's very small allowance, after paying the debts incurred during her mother's illness, would not permit of her having a maid for herself. So Moreton was to enter upon a new service in a Yorkshire family, procured for her through the kindness of Mrs. Trafford.

The morning of their departure for Windsor, Helen Mortimer accompanied Mrs. Trafford to the residence of Mrs. Cleveland. They were admitted into her presence, and found her alone. It must here be mentioned that a civil note had been written by Mrs. Barton to Mrs. Mortimer, in the name of Mrs. Cleveland, declining taking any charge of "so young a child."

Mrs. Trafford, after introducing herself, at once spoke of the intention and wish with which she had come,—

"That you will at least allow her to pay you an annual visit?" said Mrs. Trafford.

"What?" replied Mrs. Cleveland.

Mrs. Trafford raised her voice and repeated her request.

"No, I won't—I mean, I can't. I am an invalid, unaccustomed to young children. I don't think I could bear it—I really don't," replied Mrs. Cleveland.

"Is it then hopeless, your occasionally relieving me of my anxious charge, Mrs. Cleveland?"

"What?" answered she. Not that she was deaf, it was only a tiresome way of hesitating and gaining time. Again Mrs. Trafford spoke, rising as she did so. As she was evidently on the point of departing, Mrs. Cleveland this time softened her refusal with saying,—

"I am sorry I can't, I'm such an invalid." Then she suddenly brightened. "But there are the Trevelyan girls over the way, she might go and play with them sometimes. Well, if you send her now and then we'll see about it."

So Mrs. Trafford departed for Windsor, and that evening little Helen slept in a neat small room appropriated to her use by her aunt.

## CHAPTER IV.

HELEN MORTIMER spent the first years of her youth in the pleasant and quiet home provided for her.

Mrs. Trafford was unable to give her what is commonly considered a finished education. The child had no instructress but herself; she learned no foreign languages, Mrs. Trafford being honest enough to own that her pronunciation of French was nearly unintelligible. She learned to read, to write, to work, in which accomplishments Mrs. Trafford felt that she was capable of instructing her niece.

The society she mixed with was of a limited nature, companions of her own age she had none. Mrs. Trafford's usual round of visitors comprised two old Miss Wilkinsons, and a widow lady of the name of Benson; a disagreeable grandson came from London occasionally on a week's visit to the last-named lady, who made no disguise of thinking him the most desperate character amongst her acquaintance.

Thus the life of Helen Mortimer was one

of little excitement, as far as outward circumstances were concerned. She never left Windsor except once a-year, when she went to London and spent two dismal days at Mrs. Cleveland's house, in Queen Anne Street—dismal at least to most girls they would have been, but not to Helen. There was to her an air of romantic sacredness shed over that dim dwelling, by the fact of its being the abode of those who professed the same faith with herself. Of that faith she had, indeed, but an uncertain outline, still she clung fondly to the idea of fulfilling her mother's dying wishes. She read over and over again the small number of books left for her instruction and guidance. The glimpses she caught at times of the comparative splendour attending the offices of religion in her own Church filled her heart with longing desires to have the veil removed, which she imagined hung between her and the full enjoyment of spiritual light.

At fifteen she was an unhappy and restless creature. She found it impossible to speak on the subject nearest her heart to any one. She felt the composed or careless manners of those around her chill her sunken spirit. Naturally of an imaginative and nervously excitable temperament, the awful concerns of eternity, her own unfulfilled duties and perilous state, glared upon her in a way that alone, and unassisted as she was, at times almost

maddened her. Yet so calm was the surface of that interesting face and gentle deportment, that Mrs. Trafford would have been amazed had the truth been revealed to her. True, the old lady insisted on one chapter in the Bible being read morning and evening by Helen to her; but Miss Mortimer felt the impossibility of reconciling an independent formation of opinions with the implicit obedience she felt so inclined to regard as the safest and happiest rule of life; and that obedience she knew enough to feel sure was a necessary evidence of a humble and Christian spirit. Thus situated, she made up her mind to exercise one virtue at least—that of patience: she determined to wait until she was of an age sufficiently advanced to enter on some employment, and then to relieve Mrs. Trafford from the burden and expense of maintaining her. She thought of offering her services to some lady as a companion; this idea she often revolved in her mind as she took her morning and evening walks through some of the loveliest and loneliest haunts of the Royal Forest.

She loved the hours spent in that beautiful solitude more than those can understand who have had their days filled with more exciting pleasures. With a book in her hand to lead her thoughts in a continued channel she would go out alone; for hours would she



stay lingering in the ferny walks and by the smooth green banks of Virginia Water, indulging her love for the sylvan magnificence and enchanting loveliness of those matchless glades and dells.

Those were, though she did not then think so, the happiest days of her life. Why do we universally acknowledge this, when the blessed hours have fled from us for ever, and we sigh in vain for "the merry days when we were young?" So her days passed on and on, until the spring of 1824. In May she went to London, to spend two days with Mrs. Cleveland. She was then just sixteen. She set forth alone and reached Queen Anne Street safely. To her surprise she found Mrs. Cleveland in a state of some excitement; her son was coming home, and had promised to stay some months. The mother dilated much on the immense relief his presence would be to her. The servants were getting the upper hand of her. Hardy had been decidedly familiar, if not impertinent, of late; the housemaid had given warning, expecting to be asked to stay; Mrs. Barton had become gay and foolish—she had twice gone out to tea with unknown friends without asking leave, and altogether it was high time Cleveland should come and look after her. Miss Mortimer agreed humbly to all Mrs. Cleveland wished her to believe, and returned the next day to Windsor with a patronising pro-

mise from his mother that Cleveland should come and pay her a visit.

This was an event, indeed, looked forward to with some anxiety by Helen, and with much curiosity by the neighbours at Elmswood. Miss Wilkinson half expected him to appear in a mitre, or at least in red shoes and stockings. Mrs. Benson did not look forward with any certainty to this prospect. Mrs. Trafford despised the suggestion as to outward disguise; she anticipated plain and gentlemanlike clothing, but she was inclined to expect some disagreeable differences, and perhaps an open warfare. Mrs. Benson's grandson was then on a visit to his old relative. He expressed a strong disapprobation of the Romish clergy, as a body of useless men, but he still meant to go and call and see what Cleveland was like.

On a Wednesday evening, the 2d of June, Mrs. Trafford had invited a few of her friends to tea. It was a lovely evening, the close of a glorious summer's day; the sinking sun threw its slanting beams and lengthened the shadows across the smooth lawn and over the winding walks of the pretty little garden of Elmswood, then in the full blush of flower and blossom.

In the bay-window of the small drawing-room, the sashes thrown wide open to admit the light air of evening, was stationed the tea-table, covered with cake and muffin, and

surrounded with six ladies and two gentlemen in the full occupation of eating, drinking, and talking.

"I assure you," said Miss Wilkinson, "their income is by no means what people imagine it to be."

"But they see a great deal of company," murmured Mrs. Benson.

"Oh! that don't matter," returned the former lady. "I know of many shabby tricks they are constantly playing. Now, I'll tell you," she added, with an air of engaging frankness—a phalanx of heads were turned in the direction of the oracle about to speak, when the hall-bell was heard to ring. Appealing looks were turned to Mrs. Trafford, who said she could not imagine who the uninvited guest could be. Miss Mortimer had watched in silence the approach of a gentleman towards the house, and as he drew near the door she felt convinced it was Mr. Cleveland, come to fulfil his mother's promise of a visit.

The servant soon put an end to all doubt by bringing in a card with his name. There was silence in the small party so talkative before. Mrs. Trafford rose. She felt rather frightened. "Beg—beg Mr. Cleveland to walk in." Immediately he entered the room and was introduced to his young relation, Miss Mortimer, and accepted the offer of tea. He said he had dined at the inn, and pro-

posed staying the following day in the neighbourhood. By this time the spell of uneasy silence had been broken, and the party once more began to converse—varying, however, from their usual adherence to local subjects of interest, and entering on more general topics.

“Have you seen the castle, sir?” inquired Mrs. Benson respectfully.

“Many years ago,” replied Cleveland.

“I hope you admire the scenery between this and London, sir?” timidly said Miss Wilkinson; “though, of course, it’s nothing to you who have seen so much abroad,” she added, half-frightened at her own audacity in venturing to compass his private thoughts.

Cleveland did not reply, for he had turned his head and was looking at Miss Mortimer. She sat silent—her eyes were fixed on the ground, and she appeared almost unconscious of the presence of others.

Young Mr. Benson, who had felt himself neglected by society during the last few minutes, now resolved to regain that pinnacle from which he had been dethroned by the unexpected appearance of a good-looking stranger. He accomplished this by playfully asking if they were to sit there all night, and whether it would not be pleasant to take a turn in the garden?

This proposal was universally agreed to, and Cleveland rose with the rest. He ap-

proached Miss Mortimer and spoke to her. She asked him whether he would like to go out? He assented, saying the evening was delightfully cool. Miss Mortimer threw a light shawl over her shoulders, and they went out.

The party dispersed by degrees through the small grounds, and Cleveland and Helen were left at last alone near one of the gates leading out into the fields.

"Do these meadows belong to Mrs. Trafford?" he inquired, as they leaned together over the low white paling.

"Yes," said Miss Mortimer, "they do; and beyond, a lane leads you to the Forest."

"And you, I dare say, walk often there?" said Cleveland.

"Oh, yes. Every day, and every evening too," said Helen. "It is so pleasant a place!"

"Are you inclined to go there to-night? It is not late," said Cleveland, looking at his watch—"it is only a quarter-past eight."

Mrs. Trafford's hours were primitively early, but still there was time for a short walk in the Forest, never more beautiful than at the close of a long summer's evening.

Miss Mortimer found she had the key in her pocket, and they walked on through the meadows, reached the narrow lane, and pass-

ing through the entrance, they wandered towards the banks of Virginia Water.

At that still hour the lake lay like a mirror at their feet, reflecting the calm sky and overhanging trees with magical clearness.

"How lovely this is!" said Cleveland.

"I do not think any place can be more beautiful," said Miss Mortimer. "I have passed many hours here in my life."

"And you have always lived here?" inquired Cleveland.

"Since my mother's death—yes," replied Helen.

"And you, I suppose, are quite happy and contented?" he said.

"Oh, Mrs. Trafford is so kind; she has done every thing for me, indeed," replied Miss Mortimer. Her eyes were fixed on the ground when she spoke, and Cleveland looked earnestly at her. Hers was a thoughtful face, but one full of the most simple, honest, and open expression.

"You will then continue to live with her?" inquired Cleveland.

"I am not sure," said Miss Mortimer. Perhaps I shall find it better to try and do something for myself by-and-by."

"What?" said Cleveland, in some surprise.

"As companion to a lady; a governess I am not by education fitted for—I am totally unaccomplished." She stopped, ashamed of

having said so much, and carelessly played with the wild flowers she had gathered on their walk.

"Mrs. Trafford will be sorry to lose your society, surely? She would feel your departure severely," said Cleveland.

"Perhaps," said Miss Mortimer, almost mournfully. There was a short pause; then she seemed to feel that she was not doing the honours of the Forest as she might, and she said suddenly,—

"Oh! I suppose you would like to get a view of the castle? To-morrow I will shew you. I am afraid it is too far to-night, and we must not be late at home. We must be home by half-past nine."

"What, have you evening prayers?" said Cleveland, from a special hour being mentioned.

"Oh, no," said Miss Mortimer. "No prayers. But you see Mrs. Trafford has some company to-night, and I *must* go in," she added, with solemn emphasis, that shewed she would rather have stayed out.

"And you would rather remain here," said Cleveland, smiling, "I know."

Miss Mortimer felt he was speaking domestic treason against the "company" invited by her aunt, but she was half-incensed by her thoughts being so quickly guessed.

There is no charm so subtle as that of finding our private annoyances with tire-

some relations guessed at, and tacitly sympathised with by one whom our imagination has begun to paint as vastly their superior. Miss Mortimer had felt, for the last two years of her life, the intolerable burden of living with uninteresting people, greatly her inferiors in many ways, and not being yet conscious of the cause of the disease, she was unable to look or hope for a cure.

When the inferiority of those around her is mentioned, humble order of intellect is not the chief deficiency; but hers was a life uncheered by one aspiring thought above the dust and rubbish of the most commonplace gossip. She felt, day by day, carried on, she knew not whither, surrounded by the careless, the cold, and those who sometimes "really wondered what she meant." She let weeks and months roll on, and further and further she was drifted from any settled hope of future happiness either here or hereafter.

Yet of happiness she had formed an idea almost unknown to herself, for who has not been haunted by an airy vision of some promised land? Vision-like, indeed, as years pass on, perpetually it changes its hue and form, to suit the ever-altering destiny of the dissatisfied and yearning heart.

Cleveland stayed two days at Elmswood—Mrs. Trafford overcame her fear of him—the neighbours declared he was very pleasant—Mrs. Benson thought him "affable



in his manners," and her grandson proclaimed him to be a very clever fellow.

Miss Mortimer felt he was of a different order from any other human being she had ever seen. Immeasurably superior, yet how kind, how unassuming were his manners, especially to herself! Still she feared him—feared him as those only can fear who admire, if possible, more.

He had spoken to her a great deal, and thus performed a miracle the most charming any creature can experience. He had raised her in her own estimation. Not that he had flattered her; but what compliment is more subtle in its effects on a young girl than being simply listened to with interest?

Cleveland's impression of Helen Mortimer was, that she was very nearly a heathen, totally ignorant, very warm-hearted, interesting, gentle, and one that had been so neglected that her mind was ready to receive any very strong impression which it might be worth his while to make on it.

As to his mother's behaviour to their young relative, he was very much ashamed of it. "To have left her thus," he thought, as he walked up to Elmswood, to take leave before returning to town; "to have left her thus, uncared for, totally in the hands of careless professors of an opposite belief, how could it be otherwise than that she should

turn out what she is? But, thank Heaven, there is yet time: it is not too late." And he felt, moreover, he had the reins in his own hands.

As he reached the house, he found Miss Mortimer standing beneath the spreading branches of the large yew-tree: she was training a slip of honeysuckle to cling round the huge trunk. Cleveland drew near; she turned round, and he said,—

"I am come to wish you good-by, Helen."

"When are you going?" she inquired.

"In an hour," he replied.

"Oh! I mean back to the Continent?"

"I do not quite know," he answered.

"Certainly not for some months."

"Oh, I am so glad!" she said; "because then I shall see you again. You will perhaps come here once more. I assure you you have not half seen the beauties of the Forest. I have many more places to shew you."

Cleveland felt pleased—he promised to come again; and then he said, "Good-by." Kindly he pressed her hand and hoped to see her soon, but he had a great deal to do.

So he went. Helen watched him proceed down the short avenue to the white gate, and listened to the retreating footsteps with a vague melancholy longing she was

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surprised to feel for so new an acquaintance.  
But her age was that

“When life has wings,”

and hours do the work of years in early  
days.

## CHAPTER V.

CLEVELAND returned to London, and for a week or two Miss Mortimer heard no more of him. She began to think he had forgotten her. This was an unpleasing conviction; it was one that rapidly gained ground in her mind, however.

All things had resumed their usual course at Elmswood, but she felt she had been led one step beyond the dim circle of daily events; she thought over and over again of the words, the looks, the very turn of the phrases Cleveland used. There was to her an inexpressible charm in that clear impressive voice, that peculiarly earnest way of speaking, which invested all subjects, and especially the subject of religion, with a startling power she had never experienced the force of before. He appeared invested with the glorious privilege of making clear what had been merely darkness visible. He spoke of the necessity of earnest belief, daily sanctification, hourly serving the God whom all profess to worship, the glory that attends the rise and progress of the devoted follower, the especial

privileges of the chosen flock, the field that is open for all who will seek to serve the Lord with the good works most pleasing in his sight.

Miss Mortimer listened, and felt she, too, had an aim—one end in life to seek. How was it so many could continue cold, careless, indifferent? She forgot that her own experience was unhappily a very limited one.

Three weeks after Cleveland's visit she received a short letter from his mother, begging her to pay them a visit, and naming a day for her coming. The invitation caused a rush of pleasurable feelings in the heart of Helen: she was not then forgotten; she would see Cleveland again, and again experience the charm his society had exercised over her when they had met before. She spoke to Mrs. Trafford, who looked surprised, rather, but said she had no objection, and on the Thursday Miss Mortimer was to go to London.

On the Wednesday evening—it was one of the last days of June—she went alone to take a sort of farewell walk in the Forest; she felt somehow that the days were ended in which Elmswood was to be her only home; that a long course of imprisonment was over; that the tiresome days, the long evenings, when Mrs. Trafford fell fast asleep, and she had to spend solitary hours, uncheered by books suitable for her use, would never come

again ; and indeed these long, long evenings were the worst, when the ticking of the ormoulu clock, adorned with a deformed Cupid, became almost intolerable, and Mrs. Trafford woke up with a frustrated snore, and declared she felt "rather heavy." Yet she had enjoyments of her own, too. The summer evenings were her especial hours of recreation : then alone, with a book, she went out ; the world around at such hours appeared no longer the same ; the woods, the skies, the dim glades, and long green walks assumed a soothing and solemn beauty, which the mystery twilight flings over even the most ordinary scene contributed largely to enhance.

She lived thus two separate lives—one, punctiliously commonplace, during which she would not have had any of her day-dreams known, or coolly canvassed, for the world ; —another and a happier, of snatches of secret and pensive enjoyment ; of delight in the unutterable beauty and silent poetry of the lone and lovely haunts she so constantly frequented.

That evening in June she stood beneath a green arcade, formed by the meeting of several large and fine beeches. How often, oh, how often, had she sat there since the days of childhood, when the sun-beams quivered through the shade and flung down a mixture of green and golden light on the smooth turf below !

This spot had been, in days long past, her childish idea of a fairy palace ; it was the place, of all others, where she loved to read or to dream the hours away. As she stood there that evening, she remembered that she had not taken Cleveland to see it, and she felt sorry. Once in after-years they stood there together, when the calm beauty of the spot had lost for her its power of charming and soothing.

Slowly she walked back through the dewy meadows, and found Mrs. Trafford wondering why she had stayed out so late, when she had to pack her clothes. The following day she set off for London.

She found the party in Queen Anne Street rather discomposed. Mrs. Barton had left them that day.

"Quite in a sudden huff, I may say," said Mrs. Cleveland.

That evening Cleveland did not come in till late. The lamp had not yet arrived. Hardy thought it an unnecessary indulgence bringing any light up stairs before ten in the month of June. At last Cleveland entered the room, and shook hands with Helen. She had thought so much of him in absence that his presence at first confused her : she could only see the outline of a dark figure against the wall ; but though she did not study the expression of his face, she heard by his voice that he was cordially glad to see her, and

she felt greatly relieved, for she had begun to suspect that he might think her in the way. Soon he rang for lights, in spite of Mrs. Cleveland's assurances that the lamp came up of its own accord. During the greater part of the evening he read aloud, while the ladies worked, and Helen hoped that so every evening would be spent.

The following night, after tea had been sent away, Cleveland inquired if she played any sacred music? And he looked towards the piano that stood in a corner of the room.

"No, no—I hardly know my notes," said Miss Mortimer.

"I have some chants I think very beautiful," said Cleveland; "I will bring them down." And he left the room.

Miss Mortimer felt sorry she could not play, still it was not an impossible attainment. She said nothing, but resolved to try. Cleveland came in, and laid before her some of the finest old chants he had collected on the Continent several years before. She looked them over, professed her inability to play, but promised to learn. Cleveland thanked her in a kind manner, and again he read aloud the rest of the evening.

The next night he was very much engaged with correcting the proof-sheets of a work he was about to publish; for which purpose, indeed, principally he had come to England.



There were other reasons, also. He had come to inspect some establishments in this country, and he intended to officiate and preach in one of the largest Catholic chapels in London. He sat at a table, busily engaged — his finely-formed head stooping over the occupation he was engaged in. Miss Mortimer hoped he would lay aside his papers, and again entertain them with reading aloud; but he continued busily occupied. At last he looked up quickly, and said, "I wish you could do this for me, I am in a hurry." Helen immediately came near. He explained in a few words what he wished done. It was to copy neatly and exactly, with some additions which he was about to dictate.

She took the pen in her hand, and sat down beside him. With some nervousness, she followed rapidly in writing the words as he spoke them. The whole came to a satisfactory ending, and Cleveland found her so useful and exact, that she, from that evening, wrote a great deal for him.

When she had stayed a fortnight with Mrs. Cleveland, she proposed returning to Windsor. Mrs. Cleveland bemoaned herself much. She had lost Mrs. Barton, whose unworthy conduct had disgusted her with widow-ladies as companions. She did not see why Helen could not stay. It was very hard she was never allowed to see her.

Mrs. Trafford was decidedly a selfish woman to wish her to return. Helen was glad to stay, and she did so.

Thus Mrs. Cleveland's house became her home indeed. She was pitied by some for having to lead "such a dull life for a young girl;" but they knew little of her who spoke thus. The few visitors she saw were the doctor, an occasional apothecary, and some old ladies, who made a point of offering some consolations to Mrs. Cleveland for imaginary headaches and ideal interior derangement.

Helen generally walked every day with Cleveland. At first he did not allow her to accompany him in the visits he paid to the poor and sick. But one day, when they were returning from a long walk, and were overtaken in a shower of rain, Cleveland suddenly proposed to take her into the house of a person he had often visited and assisted. He did so. They went together up a long dark stair or two, and at last reached a small upper room, humbly furnished, but clean, and comfortable. On the bed lay an old creature—a woman, apparently quite helpless. Her eyes brightened when she saw Cleveland, and she stretched out a withered hand. He kindly greeted her, and sat down on a low seat at her side.

"You are come again so soon! How kind you are!" she exclaimed.

Helen looked round the small chamber.

On the wall, in front of the bed, hung a humble representation of our Lord on the cross. Beneath were laid a few fresh leaves and a wreath of everlasting flowers. A mass-book and crucifix shewed she was of the same faith as her visitors.

They did not stay very long. Cleveland rose, and laid some money in the palm of her hand.

"Always generous! You do too much for me. God reward you. I pray for you."

"I thank you," said Cleveland, "for your wishes and prayers."

"You have both. You are the good angel of my life."

Helen accompanied him down stairs, and as they walked on together towards home these words rang in her ear still.

Had he not, indeed, deserved the same acknowledgment from her? He had enlightened her ignorance, delivered her from the burden of feeling that the life which she led was useless and ungodly. He, and only he, had put her in the right path—a path, certainly, of strict self-denial, and of perfect seclusion from the allurements of the world, ever dangerous to the young and light-hearted, but not on that account repulsive and rugged. For, under his guidance, and looking up to him as she did, there seemed to be no one object beyond his society which she could ever desire to attain.

At this time Cleveland was just forty—he looked rather more; and thus was entitled, by age and relationship, to take the charge of Miss Mortimer.

The latter, after spending eight or nine months with Mrs. Cleveland, again offered to return to Windsor; but neither she nor Cleveland would hear of it. Her home was with them—unless she wished to leave them.

“Leave you! Oh, no! I could not be happy there—any where else—now, Mr. Cleveland. Here alone have I ever been really happy.”

Cleveland kindly took her hand; and she looked honestly in his face, and said, “You have been the good angel of *my* life. I remember hearing these words applied to you; and I add my acknowledgements in the same way.”

“No,” said Cleveland; “you must not thus praise the humble means—the creature before the Creator.” He left the room hastily; and Miss Mortimer remained, thinking over all she owed to him indeed. She had been led from the vain and foolish pursuits of an unthinking world; set apart, by his means, to lead a holy, self-denying life—a life which led her, as she believed, each day nearer and nearer to the gates of heaven. She followed as closely as she dared in his footsteps, and felt that

thus she might, indeed, hope, this short life ended, to join that glorious company of which she, in her heart, believed Cleveland to be the visible type on earth.

The only companions she had spoken to all this while were the Misses Trevelyan, the daughters of a barrister. They were acquainted with Mrs. Cleveland, and had, therefore, seen more of Miss Mortimer than any one else.

The eldest of these young ladies was her favourite in the family.

Frances—(she had miraculously escaped being called “Fanny”)—was then about one-and-thirty. Without any pretensions to be called clever, she was a person whose conversation and society were to some eminently satisfactory. There was a clear simplicity, a thoughtful tenderness about her, that engaged the heart and won upon the affections in a degree to which more brilliant characters are often incapable of attaining.

This lady was the only friend Helen Mortimer ever devoted much time to. She was a Protestant, and, therefore, their difference of belief was a subject rarely, if ever, touched upon. They spoke, however, of the great truths in which they might unite in mind and opinion; and this, of course, suddenly, at times, caused each to start from the point on a different road.

One day they were walking alone in one

of the neighbouring squares. It was summer, and they happened to observe a number of carriages successively approach a large house, of which they had a view through an opening in the bushes round the iron fence: they watched several gaily dressed figures spring out of these carriages, and go up the few steps that led into the hall, of which the door stood open to receive them.

"A large party, I think," observed Miss Trevelyan. "That is Mrs. Perceval's carriage—the Bishop's wife, I was speaking to you of. I am still thinking, do you know, of what you said to me the other day. I fancy that, in spite of what you asserted so strongly, the life of a clergyman's wife must be a very happy one. I think," she said, half laughing, "I should like, myself, thus to enter into holy orders—for so I really consider it. It is my *beau idéal* of a perfectly happy life."

"Then, I'm sure, I don't agree with you," said Miss Mortimer. "I think that the advocacy of marriage with the life of a priest lowers our view of the Church and its members. I would have the clergy set apart from the cares, the more earthly anxieties, of this world. Much less selfish it must make them; and how much more imposing is their situation, when raised above the common worrying, petty cares, of the world! Their in-

fluence becomes in such a case much more irresistible. It is impossible to refuse placing implicit confidence in a man of God, set especially apart to obtain, and hold, and keep that power which is delegated to him for our good."

"Implicit confidence in any one human being is what I cannot comprehend," said Miss Trevelyan. "And I do not believe such overweening power is good, either for those who wield or for such as submit to it."

"But if the individual be a member of the Church of Christ, and endowed with the gifts of sanctity and excellence besides?" inquired Miss Mortimer.

"We are all equally members of that Church," said Miss Trevelyan. "Some administer—some receive. I have often thought," she added, "that we require to be more impressed than we are with a sense of the unity of the service of clergy and laity. It is, I think, dangerous, thus to divide our responsibilities—placing all command on one side, all obedience on the other."

"But the duty of cultivating a humble and teachable spirit!" said Miss Mortimer. "Ah! if you knew what it is to lay down in peace your own will, your own ways, your own thoughts, and feel how simple, child-like obedience tends to safety and happiness!"

"Such submission of mind and soul," replied Miss Trevelyan, "if felt with respect

to our Creator, is indeed the source of perfect peace; but no earthly image must venture to stand between our souls and our God."

"An intercessor *is* necessary," said Miss Mortimer, anxiously.

"Yes, one indeed! But that is provided in the great mystery of the Trinity in Unity," replied Miss Trevelyan, solemnly.

"Oh! there we agree, of course. But I—we require a more tangible type of our hope. Now, what can be a more manifest shewing forth of that hope than our Church, as a body, having the undoubted power to absolve—to assure—to pardon—to punish—to bless? On the doctrine of her infallibility she stands as on the rock of ages. It is, it must be, the special, distinguishing mark of the one true Church—'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' Yes, for ever," she added earnestly, almost speaking to herself. Miss Trevelyan said no more at the time, and they soon left the Square gardens to return home.

When a year had elapsed since Miss Mortimer's arrival in London, she heard that there was a great chance of Cleveland's being obliged to go from home. He proposed going to Ireland; but it was quite uncertain how long he might stay, and his absence would make a blank, indeed, in the small circle. Mrs. Cleveland had become



more imbecile than ever. She lived a great deal in her own room now; and Miss Mortimer looked forward, with a feeling akin to horror, to the thought of being left quite solitary.

The evening before Cleveland's departure he was alone in his own sitting-room, engaged in putting up some papers and sealing and directing letters.

He heard a slow step on the stair, and Miss Mortimer asked permission to enter.

She came in, and said, "You are alone. I do not like to lose your company: may I sit here, Mr. Cleveland? I will not disturb you, I will help you if I can. Oh! now tell me, when are you coming back? What shall we all do here without you?"

Cleveland answered hurriedly—he was folding a letter—"Do? oh, what did you do before I came home?"

"Nothing," said Miss Mortimer, mournfully. He smiled faintly.

"Shall I seal these?" she said, rising and standing beside him.

"If you please," he replied. "And I will leave some directions about things I want done."

"Any thing, every thing, I will do, I am sure, that I can," replied Miss Mortimer. "Why *must* you go away, just now? What takes you away now?"

"Duty, duty," said Cleveland. "I have

promised to visit some friends in Ireland; and, indeed, I expect to be interested in what I shall have to do."

"I wish I was going, too," said Miss Mortimer. "Do you know, Mr. Cleveland, I have the greatest wish, once at least, to visit a Catholic country. I feel here like an alien—an outcast—one with interests apart from others."

"Yes," said Cleveland, mournfully; "that is at present the lot of the Church: 'our holy and our beautiful house' is, for awhile, enveloped in mists and darkness; yet it stands in as spotless beauty and unfading strength as ever. Patience and time are the two slow remedies, I believe—if we *only* believe," he said again. "But it is a trial of our faith: 'Every son whom he loveth he chasteneth.' The contempt, the degrading suspicions, to which we are here subjected, are, after all, a slight punishment for heavy sins. But it is not *that* I feel, Heaven knows," said Cleveland, fervently. "But to see so many lost and perishing for lack of the food they wilfully reject—the scattered sheep who will not come to us that they may have life!"

"Life! yes!" said Miss Mortimer, thoughtfully. "Yet how strange that some who are without the fold should still have such firm belief in their salvation, and also such an earnest sense of the perils of the unknown"

road, on which they have themselves perversely set forth!" She paused, and then said, "Have you ever, Mr. Cleveland, read a book I once, in my childhood, read—'The Pilgrim's Progress?'"

"I have," he replied. "With many absurdities, it is a good book, written by an earnest, enthusiastic spirit." Miss Mortimer looked relieved at this decision.

"Oh," she cried, "I can never, never describe one half the impression it made on me! I used to take it to the Forest. There I read it, by small passages at a time, for every syllable appeared so awfully full of meaning, that my heart and head, I used to fancy, would burst if I read more. However, I read on and on. I could hardly imagine, when I looked at the careless world around, that those I saw so happy, so composed, could contain within their hearts such a combat as Christian and Faithful waged and won. I remember reading the entry into the Celestial City—the passing of the unknown river, one fine sunset evening, beneath my favourite beeches. Oh, what a glory did the world—the scene before me—appear to put on! I only read it once through. I was frightened at my own feelings. I cried wildly, and felt the silence around me, not soothing—no, unbearable. Thus, my heart was filled, Mr. Cleveland, with the awful longing to know more clearly

what I was—what I might be ; what was, indeed, the straight gate, the narrow way. The Beauty of Holiness I longed to worship. I felt the influence, but knew not the way to approach worthily. Like one haunted by the ‘phantom of a song,’ I longed to join ; but I knew not the words. You unfolded them to me, Mr. Cleveland—you have led me thus far—and,” she added, her eyes filling with tears of grateful love, “I hope so to live and die, with you always near me.”

Cleveland was stooping down near the lamp ; he bent his head still lower over the paper he was folding, and said,—

“And what, if you——perhaps you may marry, Miss Mortimer?”

“I! Never!” she replied. “No, Mr. Cleveland, I never could be so happy as here. I shall never marry!”

He looked up with an eager flash of pleasure in his eyes—they were of the violet blue, that I believe have greater power of expression than any other. Miss Mortimer looked calmly in his face. He said then—“But this house is dull for you ;” and Miss Mortimer looked round the room, saying, with a smile, “This, perhaps, is not the most brilliant reception-room in the world.” It was a large, dim apartment, rather shabbily furnished, and hardly lighted with the one lamp that burned on the table. The sight made her sad, for there were preparations

around for the departure of Cleveland. They remained silent for some time. At last, Miss Mortimer rose and said she was going up stairs,—it was tea-time. Cleveland followed her soon after, When he came into the room, Helen was struck with the expression of melancholy that hung over his face. She made tea for him and Mrs. Cleveland. She brought his cup and put it beside him.

“You are tired,” she said, venturing to lay her hand on his arm. “How pale you look, Mr. Cleveland!”

“I am not tired,” he replied; but that was all. There was gloom in his manner, that she had rarely seen before. She shrank from it. She went to the piano, and sat down. She laid her hands on the keys, and played one of the fine old chants that Cleveland loved so well. The solemn and simple harmony fell gratefully on his heart—a heart open to the charm of music, and especially so when united to the words of sacred praise.

He listened in silence, and Miss Mortimer continued to play. An hour passed, and still he listened. Miss Mortimer almost imagined he was asleep, for his face was hidden by the hand that shaded it from the nearest light. She arose, and shut the lid of the instrument softly. He started, and looked up. Did she see aright? were

there traces of tears in the eyes of Cleveland? She felt more confounded than at any other thing she had ever seen. She almost mechanically wished him good night.

"Good-by! It is good-by," he said, quickly; "for I go early in the morning—very early: so I shall not see you."

She left the room, saying,

"Oh, yes! I shall see you to-morrow, Mr. Cleveland."

By daylight next day she was down stairs, and found Cleveland taking a cup of coffee before going off. She came into the room, and sat down opposite to him. He arose, and taking a book from his pocket he put it into her hand, saying, "Read this—it is for you, Helen. I have written your name in it. Good-by—God bless you."

He left the house, and Miss Mortimer looked at the little volume he had left. It was bound in white vellum, and silver clasps held together the gilded and illuminated leaves. It contained the Life of a Saint, and on the first leaf was written, in Cleveland's hand,—

"H. M. from H. C.

Sep. 1826.

*Pro tempore, vita*

*Non visa, eterna."*

## CHAPTER VI.

MISS MORTIMER found the hours spent alone with Mrs. Cleveland hang heavily on hand, for that lady's society was unutterably dismal. Still Helen exerted herself on her account. She read to her till she fell asleep. She talked to her when she awoke, and bore all her varied tempers with uncomplaining gentleness.

She went to visit Mrs. Trafford at Windsor. The latter was very glad to see her—confided to her the news of the neighbourhood—how many servants she had discharged—whom the cook had “taken an ill-will at”—and, in short, Helen soon found herself at home again there.

She went every day to renew her acquaintance with the old, familiar objects in the Forest. She visited daily some of her favourite haunts, and loved to think of the day she and Cleveland had first stood together on the banks of Virginia Water.

“Ah!” she thought, as she turned away for the last time from the calm lake, “my

sun has arisen ; I am happy—satisfied : if I can so go on to the end of life, how glorious a privilege to proceed thus undisturbed along a narrow, but a pleasant road to heaven!” She thought of Cleveland—his excellence—his pure and holy life—his gentleness—the unshaken confidence in his truth and judgment he had so eminently the power of inspiring.

“Heaven bless you, Cleveland!” she thought. “But you do not need the prayers of such a humble follower as I am. Still I love to number over your perfections, and feel I have an interest in the one I so reverently admire.”

She went to the beech-trees, and sat down under their shade. The evening was still. The autumn breeze had scattered the discoloured leaves around her ; yet she thought the scene before her had never appeared more lovely. The sky and earth wore a solemn and a sober beauty, which filled with a vague and tender melancholy the heart that was alive to the sense of its romantic loneliness.

Suddenly at a distance she heard voices ; she rose with a dread of having the spell of a dreamy delight thus rudely broken. She walked quickly on,—she stopped near the gate, almost panting with the speed she had used.

“How foolish I am!” she thought.



“Why do I thus cherish the habit of lonely enjoyment?—But oh! the luxury I cannot forego!” She reached home late and returned next day to London.

She found a note from Frances Trevelyan lying on the table: it was to invite her there that night—they had a few friends coming to drink tea. She begged her to come, and Miss Mortimer went.

When she entered the room, she found that the gentlemen were still in the dining-room, and it was twenty minutes before they came up.

“Mr. Milner is here to-night, is he not?” said a cousin of the Trevelyans.

“Yes, he is come to town for a week.”

“How is he?—He has not been well.

“No, not at all: but he is better!”

“What an agreeable, charming person he is!” There was an answer in chorus,—

“Oh, very!”

“Who is Mr. Milner?” said Miss Mortimer.

“A distant connexion of my father—a clergyman,” replied Miss Trevelyan: “his vicarage is in Devonshire—a lovely place, Ellesmere. Oh, Cecil is a very delightful person—there is no other like him in the world. You may think him reserved at first; but in a man I think that reserve is a necessary attendant on great superiority.”

The gentlemen entered soon after, while

Miss Mortimer was looking over a book of prints ; she raised her head, and in front of her saw, with the profile turned towards her, a head and face of most peculiar beauty. She almost started when the full face was turned and the dark eyes rested on her ; she looked down, but still she thought of them, and soon after Mr. Milner drew near and spoke to a lady near her.

It was a moment in her life which she ever afterwards remembered with an awful distinctness : there are moments engraven at first, which deepen by the current of events ; and, may we not believe, shall hereafter be remembered, if possible, more vividly, as having brought with them unutterable bliss or irreparable misery ?

She continued to bend over the book, and listened attentively to what was said. The subject was the weather ; but even that threadbare topic gained grace from the beauty of a pleasant voice and a remarkably agreeable manner.

There is, after all, a greater charm in the music of a well-modulated speaking voice than we are aware of. I have more confidence in the sincerity of a voice than in the truthfulness of an eye. There was a surpassing charm in the address and quiet manners of Mr. Milner. It was probably the perfect ease and repose of both

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that gave to him such a magical power of attraction.

He sat down and spoke a few words to Miss Mortimer. Music began in the next room ; some of those who sat apart rose and went nearer to the performer, but Mr. Milner continued to sit beside her. Some ballads followed, and then some of the old English madrigals ; the quaint words and peculiar music delighted Miss Mortimer, and she found Mr. Milner was equally pleased. The last piece that was sung that night was—

“ Since first I saw your face  
I resolved to honour you.”

When that was concluded the party dispersed. Miss Mortimer had only to cross the street, and she was attended to her door by Milner.

She found that Mrs. Cleveland had gone to bed ; she lighted her candle, and passed by Cleveland's sitting-room. Impelled she knew hardly by what feeling she opened the door, and for an instant looked in : the chill aspect and cold darkness of the apartment struck with a melancholy power on her heart. The clock at that instant told twelve — she started to find it so late, and hurried up stairs to bed.

She put down her candle, and flinging herself on the low seat near the dressing-table, she took up the little volume—

Cleveland's parting gift. She opened it at the Latin words he had written; they began to speak reproachfully to her—she did not read: at last the clock struck one, and she started up.

"Oh! what has come over me? My heart is full of vanity to-night!" she thought.

The next morning she saw Frances Trevelyan. Two of her younger sisters came with her; they were rather foolish girls, though harmlessly so.

"Don't you think, Miss Mortimer, that Mr. Cecil Milner is really a very beautiful man?" asked the youngest and silliest.

Miss Mortimer did not answer, and Miss Annie felt as if her question had bordered on the profane, for they had a very elevated idea of Miss Mortimer and her tastes and opinions. Indeed she had not two more zealous admirers than Annie and Minny Trevelyan. Girls of their age frequently have great discrimination with respect to their own sex, and tacitly acknowledge the superiority that does not interfere with their young vanity.

Miss Trevelyan asked her to join a party to Hampton Court—she had never been there: it was a Saturday; the band was to play near the palace, and she was much tempted to go. She accepted the invitation, and they were to call for her at one.

The family caravan of the Trevelyans

came to the door at the hour appointed, and she descended the stairs, drawing on her gloves and trying hard to imagine there was no chance of Mr. Milner being of the party; she found him at the door ready to hand her into the carriage.

"What a fine, lovely day!" said the cheerful voice of Annie Trevelyan, who had worried herself almost into a fever at the idea of being prevented by the rain.

They set off, and it was a delightful expedition. Miss Mortimer had never seen Hampton Court before, and she wandered delighted through the royal rooms with Milner and Frances Trevelyan; the two other ladies had joined Mrs. Trevelyan and an aunt from the country, who came in a chariot from town; and some of them caring for nothing more than one quick walk "through the pictures," as they expressed it, Miss Mortimer was left alone with her companions.

More and more she felt sure she had never met with any one like Milner. She owned this to herself, and felt terrified at the confession.

They stood together before an old picture dressed in a sort of ancient clerical robe, at least so it appeared to Helen. The face looked out of the canvass on hers, with a mournful look that made her think, she knew not why, of Cleveland. She felt angry

at her own folly, but the thought gained ground with her that she was somehow acting faithlessly to Cleveland: the idea haunted her through the whole day. They walked into the stately old-fashioned gardens; the clear, lovely sky, the pure chill air, the saddened beauty of the time of the falling leaf, for it was late in October, gave her a feeling of almost superstitious melancholy. The cheerful voices of her companions fell sadly on her ear. Milner, she felt sure, observed her dejection. He asked if she was tired. The watchful interest displayed by the first attention to the change of expression in a countenance is the most pleasing and perilous spell of incipient enchantment. It has passed the bounds of a cool civility, when that interest ventures so far as to interpret unasked the feelings of another.

Miss Mortimer returned home that evening almost in silence, and to the dreamy melancholy attending a long twilight drive she ascribed her depression. She sat opposite Milner; she leaned back, looking out on the dim landscape as it flew rapidly past; through the open window blew upon her face the chill breeze of an autumn evening; and, lost in a long train of thoughts and forebodings, she continued to gaze at the stars as they stole out one by one on their night-watch in the clear skies.

They reached London about eight ; the first paved street woke up those who had been sleeping or dreaming, and Annie Trevelyan informed the rest "she was frightfully hungry."

Mrs. Trevelyan informed them dinner was ready to put on the table, and she begged Miss Mortimer would join them ; in fact, she considered it a settled thing. When the invitation was given, Mrs. Trevelyan was in the act of effecting a descent from the carriage steps—a nervous thing for a stout lady in the dark ; Milner was handing her out : it was Miss Mortimer's turn next, if she came. Milner raised his eyes to hers, but did not speak to second the request ; still he half-raised his hand, as if he thought she would come after all, and Miss Mortimer entered the house with the rest.

It was one of those pleasant meals after a day spent together in a successful expedition, when the absence of form and of the stiffness consequent on a solemn long-bidden gathering of guests occasions and encourages a familiar friendliness, more like the cheerful meeting of a domestic circle than the stiff encounter of new acquaintances. Milner sat beside Miss Mortimer, and she found herself listening and turning towards him until the end of dinner. There was no disguising from herself, had she wished it, that he looked at her—that he spoke to her with

peculiar interest. He asked her several questions as to where she had lived, and where she liked best to reside, and she felt conscious he was trying to find out what were her tastes and pursuits. Miss Mortimer felt herself compelled to speak, and she answered at last almost mechanically, so terrified was she at the unaccountable cloud of mystic enchantments that seemed gathering over her senses.

Milner ceased speaking; he was quite silent for several minutes. The ladies rose to leave the table, and as Helen followed the steps of Mrs. Talbot, who had accompanied them in the morning, her eyes, she knew not how, encountered those of Milner. There was in that speaking glance something which fell on her soul with the power of an electric shock. She walked silently up stairs—guilty, trembling like a convicted felon. She wished to hurry away—to get home; the atmosphere of Cleveland's house would restore her to her senses. She said she must go.

"Why?" simply said Miss Trevelyan, with a look of surprise. Miss Mortimer rose up. This roused the dormant energies of the mistress of the house.

"Why, what has happened?" said Mrs. Trevelyan, starting from a nap, and trying hard to speak as if she had not been asleep—a piece of acting no one yet was ever able to achieve.



The gentlemen, Mr. Trevelyan and his son, Mr. Talbot and Mr. Milner, entered the drawing-room. Miss Mortimer sat down again; her heart beat, she tried to flee, she knew not why. This was clearly disproved when Milner drew near and spoke to Frances Trevelyan; he was speaking of his departure. Miss Mortimer listened with her very heart.

"I leave London the day after to-morrow," he said.

"Well, we shall see you in the winter?" said Miss Trevelyan.

"Oh, I hope so," he replied.

When? how? where? immediately flew through the mind of Miss Mortimer.

"Good-by, I am going now."

"You must wait for tea, it is just coming," said Miss Trevelyan: "I will ring for it." She rose and left the two near her together for a few moments.

Neither spoke, and both felt the silence unaccountably awkward.

Tea came, the young ladies gathered round it. Mr. Milner took leave immediately. He shook hands with Frances Trevelyan.

"*Bon voyage*, then," she said cheerfully.

"Good-by, Miss Trevelyan, — good-by, Miss Mortimer." He pressed her hand and left the room.

He was much praised by everybody. There can be nothing in the world so painful,

sometimes, as to hear even the praise of one for whom is felt a wild and unaccountable interest in the secret chambers of the heart ; the thrilling subject of the perfections, too deeply felt and acknowledged, discussed by idle, uninterested tongues, as a matter of gossip ; the name, invested with an awful, reverential charm, pronounced over and over again, as if it contained no more magic than any other string of syllables ! Miss Mortimer felt, as she sat and listened to a detailed account of all Milner said or did, the unutterable wretchedness of imagining her silence must either appear ungracious, or, worse still, suspicious. She needed not to have been uneasy ; all the party were busy talking or eating bread and butter, and if they thought at all, they imagined she was sleepy.

Under this plea, she got leave to retire before the younger girls had commenced an endless game of commerce, where every one was allowed to have six lives and as many "graces."

She was accompanied, as escort, by George Trevelyan, a very civil and light-hearted young gentleman, who did not cease speaking till the hall door had closed upon her.

The dark dull hall, the dimly lighted staircase, the solitary candle put into her hand by Hardy, who then extinguished the lamp to shew her he only sat up in consequence of her unwonted dissipation—all, all

around struck coldly upon her unhappy and feverish heart.

She passed this time quickly by Cleveland's room; she did not wish to look at the door of that gloomy chamber. She reached her own, a small fire glimmered in the grate — for the night was cold; she shivered, and throwing a shawl round her seated herself on the low seat near her table; lifting her eyes, they fell upon the reflexion of her own face in the mirror—it was ashy pale. She looked down, her eyes fell on the book Cleveland had given her — she did not unclasp it; she looked all round at the room where she had passed so many peaceful nights—its aspect seemed changed.

There is nothing more characteristic than a sleeping apartment, and the chamber of Miss Mortimer confirmed the truth of this theory.

The beautiful neatness, the very loveliness of cleanliness, shone on every arrangement; the small elegantly shaped mirror; the pure white toilette-table; the china vase on one side, containing a few sprigs of sweet geranium leaves; the book of prayer on the other; the few well-chosen volumes of poetry and prose on the round-table, drawn near the fire—Shakspeare, Coleridge, and some lives of “holy men of old;” the Prie-Dieu chair; the picture that hung on the wall, told, above all, the faith, the feeling, and the senti-

ment of the proprietress—it was a Madonna and Child, a valuable picture by Murillo, brought by Cleveland's father from Spain, and framed in a rich carving of oak, and it was the object which Miss Mortimer loved best to look at. Cleveland had hung it up in her room because she had imagined she traced, in the face of the Virgin, a likeness to her own mother. It was a picture of rare merit and most enchanting beauty; the holy tenderness and calmness impressed on the countenance of the mother had often struck Miss Mortimer, as a touching type of the perfect confidence of the Christian in the protection and promises of God. It was nearly daylight before she fell asleep, for perplexing thoughts stole, phantom-like, in endless succession through her wearied brain.

“And why, why, O Heaven, why?” she wildly questioned with herself; “we have hardly seen each other!” She was angry with herself for even thinking of the word “we.” “Interest in such a stranger!” and she hid her face in her hands when she thought of it; — it appeared so marvellous a madness.

“And I, of all people — I, who believed myself so incapable of such romance,—such sentimental folly!” For it is a curious fact, that those most deeply imbued with the qualities of romantic devotion and imaginative

sensibility are, of all others, the most heartily ashamed of both, and seek, by every means, to escape having the unwelcome epithet "romantic" attached to their names.

Reared in seclusion until the days of her childhood were quite over, then becoming almost a devotee, by her own choice as well as by that of others; unversed in the novels and light passionate tales, which serve as harmless vents to the sensibilities of other young ladies of her age; Miss Mortimer had grown up ignorant of the burning powers that lie in the depths of an enthusiastic and imaginative heart, and continue dormant till unchained by an unexpected, and perhaps unlooked-for and unbidden hand.

She was very late at breakfast; she found Mrs. Cleveland vainly trying to decipher a letter from her son. He was at Dublin. Miss Mortimer sat down and read it aloud, only interrupted by a few "what's" from Mrs. Cleveland, who had now become deaf as well as generally dumb.

Cleveland was to return the second week in January.

"More than two months still!" said Mrs. Cleveland, by an unlooked-for effort of calculation.

"Yes," said Miss Mortimer, and she was frightened to find how pleased she felt.

She preferred being alone, to wage war with her foolish thoughts.

It was a cold rainy day. She sat down to work; and till two she worked in silence, with the exception of getting up three times to re-arrange Mrs. Cleveland's knitting, when that lady called her to the rescue. She was working an endless bed-cover of an imbecile pattern.

Soon after Mrs. Cleveland begged her to write a letter, from her dictation, to Cleveland. Miss Mortimer obeyed, and sat down beside her, pen in hand. Mrs. Cleveland thought deeply, and pronounced the words "My dear Henry," which Miss Mortimer wrote, and waited. In the silence of Mrs. Cleveland's meditation a knock was heard at the door, Miss Mortimer started. Hardy entered with a card—it was for her. Mr. Milner had called, but he had said "Not at home," as Mrs. Cleveland had pronounced herself "engaged" in the morning. There it lay beside her,—“The Rev. Cecil Milner, Ellesmere.”

“Who is it?—why did he call here?—where does he live?—will he come again?—where is this place?” Such was the catechism of Mrs. Cleveland. It was not till near four that the letter was dictated, written, sealed, and sent.

Miss Mortimer found that the name of Mr. Milner began to be less frequently mentioned

in conversation by the Trevelyan's; the younger girls forgot "the very beautiful man" they had insisted on her admiring; and it was only occasionally from Frances that she ever heard his name spoken.

One day, when sitting alone with Miss Trevelyan in her room, she was looking over some books that belonged to the latter. She opened one. It was a small volume of Heber's "Poems." She read by chance the lamentation on the fallen Jerusalem,—

"Jerusalem! Jerusalem! enthroned once on high."

She read, and holding the book still in her hand, she said,—

"How unaccountable a blindness is that of the Jews! Yet to me there is something touching in the way they cling to the faded glories of their faith and nation. Few are converted, I believe; though I wonder at it."

"I do not," said Miss Trevelyan, "because I believe that a single eye, truly seeking for the truth alone, is a rarer thing than we think for amongst the best; so that many cling to their faith more from custom than conviction, from prejudice than principle. The earnest prayer for truth will, I am convinced, be granted at last. 'Ask and it shall be given unto you.' But how many, Helen, are bound by the chain of the fear of man—the influence of those whom

they have once worshipped as all perfect! I have a fear, a great dread of your Church (forgive me for so speaking), for this reason. You are so pledged to believe the truth as it is in your priest, that I always imagine the earthly image stands between you and the direct ascent of the prayer for truth and light."

She went on speaking, but Miss Mortimer only replied,—“Who gave you this?” She had looked at the first blank leaf and found some initials, as if the book had belonged to another person originally.

“Oh! that was a present from Mr. Milner. I admired the verses in it, and he gave it to me.”

Miss Mortimer did not look at her. She replaced the book, and wondered how it had never entered into her head to see that there was in the young lady's phraseology “something going on between” Mr. Milner and Frances Trevelyan. She never mentioned his name again, and Miss Trevelyan was equally silent, or, as she thought, “prudent.”

The Trevelyans soon afterwards went out of town; they were not to return till the month of January. Mr. Trevelyan was to join them at Christmas time, as he had to remain in London for some business he was transacting. They were all to meet at the house of Mrs. Talbot, Mrs. Trevel-



yan's sister, who possessed a lovely place in the western part of England—Cotesbrooke. It was in Devonshire. Before leaving London she had asked Miss Mortimer to join their party in winter, but the latter had declined this invitation, saying she could not leave Mrs. Cleveland.

When the Trevelyans were gone, Miss Mortimer's life became unusually dull. Cleveland was no longer there to read with—to talk to—to listen to—to employ herself for. The days were dark and dreary, still she exerted herself honestly in what she thought right. She visited the sick and the poor, those especially mentioned to her by Cleveland. She filled his place as much as she could in her own "humble way," as she wrote to him; but, wherever she went, she was haunted by the idea, "Milner is engaged in the same offices of charity and self-denial. He treads daily the same path of visiting, attending, and comforting those who are in need." Many, many times did she try to banish the rebellious image that would start to her side by day; by night, his imaginary presence filled every crevice of her thoughts. In every book she saw something or another which she fancied he would love or dislike, approve or disapprove. She knew from universal report that he was wise and truly excellent; her heart accepted willingly the flattery in his behalf; and yet he was of a

different faith from her own! This was a thought so unutterably painful, that she writhed beneath the conviction. She must wish him sincere. If so, he must be compelled to turn away his thoughts from her. And, indeed, she had become very vain, she thought; for why did she imagine he thought of her at all?

So the time ran on, or rather lagged, woefully. They heard occasionally from Cleveland. Miss Mortimer wrote to him weekly bulletins of his mother's health, and the month of December began.

On the 16th of the month Miss Mortimer was surprised to receive a visit from Mr. Trevelyan. He proposed going to the country on the 24th. He came to beg Miss Mortimer would take compassion on an old stupid man, and accompany him to Cotesbrooke; his daughters had written to him about it. Here was a note from Mrs. Talbot, containing a cordial invitation; and now, why should she not go? There was a seat in his chariot; he would call for her on Tuesday, the 24th, and he appealed to Mrs. Cleveland if his plan was not a very good one.

This lady, flattered at being appealed to, decided that it would be foolish, almost wicked she seemed to think, wilfully to reject such a kind offer. There was some hesitation on Miss Mortimer's part. Then came the temptation of going to the coun-

try, though it was winter; the cheerful friends, the kind, agreeable Frances: she promised to go, and on the 24th she was to depart.

She prepared herself, with some feelings of trepidation, for her visit—her first. She felt nervous. She read over the number of visitors staying in the house. There were Lady Ravenshaw — “very good-natured;” her daughter, “a very great beauty;” Mr. Baillie, “a very pleasant person;” and Uncle Stapleton, whom “every body delighted in.”

The catalogue did not sound formidable. She packed up her few and simple dresses: her ornaments were an Indian clasp of gold, brought by her mother from the East; a chain of Mr. Mortimer’s hair, to which she had suspended the plain gold cross Cleveland gave her as a new-year’s gift—it was one that had belonged to the family, and he had presented it to her a year before.

She set off on Tuesday morning. It was a lovely, brilliant winter day—a bright sky—a cloudless sun; they flew along their road, for Mr. Trevelyan had elevated ideas of speed and style, and had four horses to take them on their way. The hedges were covered with the “diamond dust” of frost and ice. A fairy world seemed to glitter around her; her heart was lighter than it had been for some time, and Mr. Trevelyan found

Miss Mortimer a more lively companion than he had anticipated.

It was dusk when they reached Cotesbrooke. They drove up a long dark avenue, and in the dim light Miss Mortimer could not distinguish any of the beauties she admired so much the following day.

It was Christmas-eve; the hall was decorated with evergreens and holly. There was no party except that which was staying in the house. Miss Mortimer was taken to her room directly to dress for dinner—a comfortable apartment, with a huge fire and everything she could want; the young ladies followed her up stairs, talking, laughing, chattering. At last, in the confusion of tongues, she heard, “Oh! he dines here to-morrow. You know Mr. Milner?—well, he is the vicar here: Ellesmere is our church—it is two miles from this. He preaches much better than old Mr. Hudson, who is quite stupid, we all think.” The speaker continued to talk, but Miss Mortimer was stunned. See him! see him to-morrow! It appeared a wild improbability, his being so near. At last she was left alone to dress and to think.

Her ideas were all in confusion. She felt frightened at the idea of seeing the object of her dreams again in the reality of the body. But as she thought and thought again, and arranged and braided her chestnut hair with trembling hands, the awful sound of the

warning gong was heard. She hurriedly finished her toilette and went down stairs.

She found the party assembled—a buzz of voices and a glare of light confused her. It was an old-fashioned room, furnished with carved oak, and adorned with some fine old family pictures; two large fire-places lined with painted tiles, and an organ, filled one end of the apartment.

The evening was passed in cheerful amusement—games, magic, music; Lady Ravenshaw told some incredible ghost stories, and the company retired in high good humour with each other.

Miss Mortimer went to her room with Frances Trevelyan; the latter stayed for some time. She spoke of many things, and at last of Milner. She spoke of him as one for whom she had the greatest admiration and respect. Miss Mortimer continued to look into the fire, till she was almost blinded by the blaze. She breathed quick, but only said, “Yes, oh, yes; I dare say. I am sure it must be the case.” Miss Trevelyan thought her cold; at last she said,—

“Well, well; you may not think of him as we do; but when you see him, and know more of him, whatever your prejudices may be, you will not be able to withhold your respect. You shall see his lovely house—the vicarage; the beauty, the peace, the excellent arrangements of all around; his schools,

his church even, I hope; for I am determined you shall go once to our church with us."

Miss Mortimer gave a faint laugh. Miss Trevelyan rose and said "Good night," and she was left alone. She was tired with her long journey, and fell asleep soon, worn out with fatigue. She was awakened at nine o'clock by the sound of singing beneath the windows near her own. She listened for an instant, and rising quickly, flung back the window-curtains and looked out.

It was a lovely, bright Christmas morning. The earth and sky had put on "a gala dress" for the great festival in which they both hold a part. Just beneath the window, on the right side of hers, were stationed a number of neatly dressed children. They were some of the village scholars come to waken the early day with a song of praise and rejoicing. The childish voices rung out like a chime of bells, clear and pure in the still and frosty air. They sang the words of Heber:—

"Brightest and best of the Sons of the Morning,  
Dawn on our darkness, and grant us thine aid;  
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,  
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on his pillow the dew-drops are falling;  
Low lies his bed 'mong the beasts of the stall;  
Angels adore him, in slumber reclining,  
Maker and Monarch, and Saviour of all.

Vainly we offer each ample oblation—

Vainly with gold would his favour secure;  
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,  
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Brightest and best of the Sons of the Morning,  
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid;  
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,  
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid."

The voices ceased; windows were flung open, some Christmas gifts were thrown out, and the little choristers retired.

Miss Mortimer found a cheerful party assembled round the breakfast-table, and arrangements were made for going to church.

"You *will* come, Helen, with us to-day?" whispered Miss Trevelyan. She urgently pressed it, and Miss Mortimer went. She drove in a low pony phaeton alone with Frances. She had an opportunity thus of seeing more fully the extreme beauty of the grounds of Cotesbrooke. The house was old and highly picturesque; a river wound its way through the park; some of the most magnificent oaks adorned the varied ground through which the road to Ellesmere led; and as they drew near the village Miss Trevelyan pointed out Milner's vicarage.

Embosomed in trees, shrouded in ivy, surrounded by evergreen shrubberies, the small, neat, old-fashioned building appeared to be situated in the very heart of the most lovely seclusion: the faint wreath of blue

smoke, the bright windows on which the sun sparkled and shone that morning, gave it the comfortable look of a happy well-ordered home. They passed the rustic gate that led up to the vicarage, and drove forward a quarter of a mile farther to the church.

The bells were ringing—the people, chiefly of the peasantry, were hurrying to the doors, for it was near the hour of service. It was an old church, picturesque from its venerable age more than from any claims to actual beauty. Miss Mortimer thus entered, almost for the first time in her life, a place of worship according to the Protestant faith. She followed Frances Trevelyan to the family pew, and looked round. In front was the humble altar, covered with “the fair linen cloth;” a gothic window, with some stained glass, above; further down were some old monuments; there hung above the tombs dusty banners, and over one that especially attracted Miss Mortimer’s attention was placed a helmet and tattered flag, with a hatchment bearing the motto of the knight who slept beneath.

The church was adorned with its usual Christmas dress of holly and evergreens; there was an organ, and a well-tuned and trained chorus began the service with singing the Morning Hymn.

Her eyes followed every word of the service in the Book of Prayer, lent her by one



of the ladies of the house. She acknowledged the undeniable beauty and fitness of the Morning Service. It was read by the curate, and Milner himself preached. The text was one she often in after days repeated to herself with tears of grief and joy:—"There is one Mediator between God and man."

She listened in terrified attention. She did wrong to be there at all. So she thought. But could even Cleveland dissent from those words of eternal truth that fell on her ear, clothed in such persuasive and gentle accents? It was truth, the purest truth she heard; why must such a line be drawn between the two faiths professed by all around her and herself? "The one true Apostolic Church, the only ark, the one fold," these were the awful words that passed in review before her; then she closed her eyes, bent down her head, and tried not to listen.

The service was over at last; those who were going out at once left the church. The rest of the party stayed, with the exception of Annie Trevelyan and Miss Mortimer. The carriages were ordered for an hour afterwards, and Miss Mortimer and her young friend proposed walking about till they came.

They set off. Annie Trevelyan commenced talking, and having assured Miss Mortimer she would take her to some beau-

tiful views, Helen let her walk and talk as she liked best herself.

Annie Trevelyan's conversation was of a varied character—rather too much so to be easily followed. She walked fast at the same time. She took Miss Mortimer through some sheltered alleys, that led them by the banks of the same river that ran through the grounds of Cotesbrooke.

Here and there she pointed out some pretty views of the country beyond; an immense extent could occasionally be seen as the ground rose gradually—an extent of cultivated and richly wooded land, the sun just touching and illuminating the spires of the distant villages, until the whole was lost in the blue mist that bounded the horizon on that lovely Christmas-day.

At last they descended rapidly from the hill they had climbed by degrees: they drew near a house.

"Well, and here's the vicarage," said Annie. "Oh, let us go in and rest ourselves! It will be so very amusing to go in when Mr. Milner does not know we are there." She went to the front door and rang the bell; a woman-servant appeared;—saying, "they wished to rest themselves," Miss Annie walked in, and first inspected the dining-room; then she went to "the parlour," as the attendant called it, and, to Miss Mortimer's great horror,

proposed asking for some slight refreshment.

"Oh, no! Pray don't! On no account! It would be very impertinent. I am sure Mrs. Trevelyan will be very angry with you."

This remonstrance had some weight, and Annie contented herself with going to inspect the poultry. Miss Mortimer, being in the house, remained there. She looked with a strange interest on the small details of every-day occupation around her. There was a paper-cutter lying in the leaves of a half-read book; she opened it. It was a new edition of the "Life of George Herbert." The touching old English of Izaak Walton acted like a spell on her heart and eyes. She continued to read, until, not daring to cut any more leaves, she laid the book carefully down in the same position again. Ink and pens, lately used, were on the table, most probably employed in writing some of the words she had just heard repeated by their author. She found herself storing her memory with the pattern of the chintz, and the device of the clock that ticked on the mantelpiece. It was a small figure of Time beside a stream of quicksilver, the gift of Milner's mother when he became Vicar of Ellesmere.

Miss Mortimer soon called Annie, and insisted on setting off to meet the carriages on their road home.

That day Mr. Milner dined at Cotesbrooke. He was the only one that came from a distance. The rest of the party were the old friends staying in the house.

Miss Mortimer was sitting in the drawing-room, near the fire, when he arrived. The moment for falling into dinner came near, and, in spite of herself, Miss Mortimer felt a wild interest in who was to take her into the dining-room that day.

"Mr. Milner, you will take Miss Mortimer;" and they walked quickly to their seats.

"She went to church with us to-day, Mr. Milner: what do you think of that?" said Annie Trevelyan, triumphantly. Her mother frowned at her audacity.

Milner said simply, "I had the pleasure of seeing Miss Mortimer there." He spoke to her frequently during dinner; but there was a tone in his voice that flung a spell of silence and fear over the heart and lips of his listener.

He went away early, and the evening concluded with another selection of improbable stories from Lady Ravenshaw.

The next day they went to dine at the house of a neighbour. Mr. Wargrave had several musical daughters, and one son, who played on a great many instruments. The party was large, and Mr. Milner formed one of its members.

He stood near Frances Trevelyan, and appeared anxious to have the pleasure of taking her into dinner. A pang, fiercer than she had ever imagined she could feel, wrung the heart of Miss Mortimer, who sat particularly still and silent. Mr. George Trevelyan offered her his arm, and she took a seat just opposite the place where Milner sat with her friend. In an instant their eyes had met; one troubled, anxious look, passed like a grey cloud over the face of Milner; then he bent down his head, and Miss Mortimer was surprised to find a tide of pleasure and hope flow through her heart, and efface for a time all the jealous miseries of the preceding ten minutes.

George Trevelyan shared the family talent for ceaseless talking. He commenced an account of a tour in Switzerland; his idea of Mont Blanc, his impression of France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, and the small portion of Spain he had been lucky enough to see. By the time he had come to the climax, by stating he had "done it all in three months," the ladies were rising to leave the dinner-table.

Gathered round the fire, the ladies, young and old, talked about the neighbours, the weather, the greenhouse, the children, the fire-screens, and who had worked them for Mrs. Wargrave.

But Miss Mortimer was almost silent;

the dawn of a most entrancing suspicion had fairly arisen in her heart; that look had shed on the world around her a light it had never shone in before, and the world within soon became a battle-field, where fought hope, fear, joy, and dread, in most unequal contest.

She was sitting on a sofa, beside Frances Trevelyan, when the gentlemen entered the drawing-room; she felt that she watched the progress of one with her heart, if not with her eyes; and the former acts sometimes as a wonderful substitute for the latter.

When music began, many drew near the instruments; there were a harp, a piano, and a guitar, and the evening flew swiftly on.

Milner came at last near the sofa where sat Miss Mortimer and Miss Trevelyan. He spoke to the latter first.

"They sing very nicely," observed Frances.

"Very nicely," replied Milner, almost mechanically. She looked at him quickly, and said,—

"Don't you think so? they surely do. You are fond of music, I thought."

Miss Mortimer turned a little towards him, and he answered in a more earnest tone,—

"Yes, indeed; I have taken great pains in directing and improving the singing of my own humble choristers."

"You are quite right," said Miss Tre-

velyan. "It is a more powerful engine, music, than we are fully aware of; it is the only earthly enjoyment, except love, which is ever alluded to as one we may hope to have to all eternity. A type it may be of what we cannot yet understand, but it is a type used by God himself, and as such to be revered."

"Noblest things find vilest using,"

said Milner.

"Ah, yes, too often so!" replied Miss Trevelyan.

A minute after, Milner said, rather in a tone of hesitation,—

"Perhaps—I mean if you have time, and like to come—you would—some of your party—come and hear the afternoon practising at Ellesmere to-morrow. The children sing in the church once a-week—on Fridays, at half-past three."

"Oh! I should like to come, of all things," said Miss Trevelyan, earnestly. "I am sure many of us will be glad to come: a delightful drive, or even walk, if it is a fine day."

"May I hope you will be of the party, Miss Mortimer?" He spoke in rather a low ceremonious tone.

"I shall be happy to come," she replied, with a slight bow of acknowledgment.

Soon after Milner rose to go. Once, just

before he left the room, he looked for one instant again at Miss Mortimer; it was an expression of interest, doubt, and fear, the meaning of which almost stunned her as it fell on her.

“Am I mad?” was the first thought that rushed into her brain in the morning. “What, O Heaven! has come over me? My head filled with dreams of him who has never addressed a word of love to me! and I, vain fool! can think he looks on one such as I am with admiration!”

She did not think it—she only felt it; thus she comforted herself. The thought of Cleveland—of the insuperable bar that divided her from Milner, and indeed from all who thought as she did, sometimes burst upon her with horror which was supernatural.

“Even, even—yes, even if so strange a thing should happen, as his thinking of me as he does of no other! Where, where, O merciful Heaven, must it end? I, for the sake of an earthly, newly awakened passion, to give up the faith of years—the counsellor of my youth, the friend, the guardian, so kind, so gentle! And Milner—Milner, if he is what I believe him to be, he must stand as firmly as I can on his own ground of belief.” Such were the thoughts that passed and repassed in endless procession through her wearied brain.



When she joined the family circle again, she resolved at any rate to fling aside all anxieties for the present hour; she tried to talk, to laugh, to rouse herself; and when the carriages came to the door at two to convey them to Ellesmere, she hastily wrapped her fur cloak round her and ran down stairs one of the first. She found Mrs. Trevelyan and Mrs. Talbot ready to depart and waiting for the rest; for no one else had yet come down into the hall.

"What a nice cloak that is!" said Mrs. Talbot, who loved to please her friends by admiring their clothes. "Where did you get it?"

"This?" said Miss Mortimer. "Oh! Mrs. Cleveland gave me this." She remembered, too, she had known at the time it was Cleveland's gift.

"When does Mr. Cleveland return?" asked Mrs. Trevelyan.

"The second week in January," said Miss Mortimer. And a sense of dismal darkness came over her spirit; she was conscious of it, and shrank from the awful conviction.

"What an ungrateful, selfish wretch, am I become!" was the ruling idea in her mind during the drive to Ellesmere.

They reached the vicarage, and drove up to the door; Milner came to receive them: the pony phaeton, in which were Miss Mortimer and Frances Trevelyan, was some

way behind the rest ; a turn in the evergreen shrubbery near the house concealed any new comers from view until close at hand.

Had Miss Mortimer been able to see the chill look of disappointment that overspread for an instant the face of Milner, and to detect the repressed grief attending the sudden conviction that she was not coming, it is hardly fair to decide how glad or how sorry she would have been.

A small neat luncheon was laid in the dining-room. The house and all the arrangements were a model of comfort and economy, for Milner had a housekeeper of the name of Mrs. Bates, deeply versed in the mysteries of "making a little go a great way," to use her own phraseology, when uplifted by any kind compliments on her cookery and management.

Miss Mortimer walked to the window, and looked out on the small neat flower-garden, even in winter adorned with the Christmas rose and laurustinus.

"Will you look at my garden, Miss Mortimer," said Milner ; "there is not much in it at any time—you see it is very small." He spoke very often to her in a tone almost humble in its softness.

He led the way into the small garden. Some patches of hard snow lay here and there among the faded flowers, but the

white Christmas rose flourished, and Milner pulled two, and as Miss Mortimer was only on the other side of the walk he gave them to her : she kept them—she wondered why, perhaps, for they have no scent those winter flowers.

Soon after, they walked to the church ; the children were there, and the schoolmaster, who played tolerably well, accompanied them on the organ.

The little choristers satisfied every one with their performance. Simple airs were sung to the words of David's Psalms, and some hymns composed by modern writers. When the children had retired from the fading light of the short winter's day, Miss Trevelyan and Miss Mortimer went up into the organ-loft to speak to the schoolmaster.

He was a man of some taste, and to please him Miss Trevellyan played Handel's beautiful air,—

“ And he shall feed his flock like a shepherd.”

The sacred tenderness of that most divine music floated through the dim church, invested with an unusual charm to Milner, who stood near the altar-rails below.

He had a spirit peculiarly alive to the entrancing effect of the combination of sacred melody and fading light. For there is a mystery in the deepening shadow which

comes home to the cultivated mind—causing every object of sense to assume, as it were, a new nature.

The music died away and stopped, and there was a pause; then rose up the spirit of harmony, speaking a different language. It spoke in the tones of the mighty chants of the Catholic Church. A firm finger and pure taste sent forth some of the finest airs of Pergoleli, Marcello, and Cherubini.

The faculty of playing with such power as to thrill and delight the listener, has always appeared to me far more wonderful than the charm exercised by the voice.

There must be a doubly exquisite connexion between the brain that conceives and feels, and the finger that impresses its meaning so fully and so well, on the unvarying mechanism of the piano or organ.

In song there is the charming tone, the ecstatic richness of the mere organ of voice, and words, moreover, to direct the imagination of the attentive hearer; but in instrumental performance, genius, passion, power in their fullest extent, must be present and brought into play, ere impressions worthy of the name can be made.

“What a beautiful air was that last you played!” said Milner, as they left the church and walked through the surrounding graveyard, beneath the deep and solemn shade of some fine old yew-trees.

"It was Cherubini's '*Et incarnatus est*,'" replied Miss Mortimer.

Milner at that instant recollected vividly the walk he had taken so many years before in the convent garden of Saint Étienne. It came back upon him like a vision long forgotten, bringing Cleveland, the ilex-tree avenue, and the distant voices of the passing choristers, distinctly before him. He said, "I have always intended to tell you," and he drew near and walked at her side, "that I am almost positive I once met, a long time ago, your friend—your guardian, I believe—Mr. Cleveland."

"Probably," replied Miss Mortimer, faintly: the name of Cleveland now began to make her heart sink.

Milner continued to speak until he observed her silence, then he withdrew hurriedly, and Miss Mortimer felt glad to think that she had been almost uncivil, and therefore owed him some reparation.

Mrs. Trevelyan and Mrs. Talbot both pressed Milner to join their party on New-year's Eve.

"Oh, you must come—you must come!" He half refused, and at last consented "to see about it." "Which always means Yes, at last," said Mrs. Talbot, as she busily settled herself in a pile of cloaks and cushions. He shook his head with a somewhat melancholy smile, and stood at the door until they had all departed.

He remained standing at the open entrance, listening in the chill twilight to the lessening roll of the wheels. And now time seemed to multiply itself,—the five minutes which had passed since he parted from Miss Mortimer growing into as many hours. It could hardly be believed that the vision which had haunted his fancy since the day they first met should have been his guest that afternoon, should have played on the organ in the church, should have walked about the very walks at his side, where she had so ceaselessly been in his thoughts as he wandered alone for exercise and relaxation.

And had not Milner striven to check the wild and vain interest he felt for one he could never look to as his future wife? Yes, indeed. He had convinced himself (so, at least, he thought) that he should never see her again—that she could not possibly care for him; and, more than this, seeing that the state of his heart did not interfere the least with his active duties, he did not take himself to task very severely for his weakness.

Again, he had seen and heard much that was most interesting with respect to Miss Mortimer. Her life of seclusion, of charity, of devotion, of unselfishness, attracted both his imagination and his better feelings of every kind. For it is past dispute, that, in circumstances such as his, the thought of all which Rome enjoins on her votaries, deepens

the interest that is apt to be felt in the fate of the votaries themselves. And Milner felt this strongly. So perfect, so pure and lovely a life, to be for ever forbidden to unite its fate and labours with his own! It was a termination too dismal to come to.

When he returned into his room that evening he looked round him, and for an instant felt a sudden conviction that all would yet be well. She was young, earnest, devout, truthful; the real light would most surely shine on the eyes that were anxiously open to receive it.

Milner at this time was six-and-thirty; his heart had never been successfully appealed to before, and so much the more were the energies of its affection called forth in behalf of the only one who had ever excited its unchangeable love.

## CHAPTER VII.

TILL New-year's Eve, Milner did not go near Cotesbrooke. Several notes had been sent on different pretexts to beg him to come, for he was a great favourite with all who knew him, but in vain.

After many, many deliberations, however, he decided on going — actually going—and he went.

There were some additions to the party at Cotesbrooke, for some neighbours had come to pay the honours due to the season. There was a large dinner, music, and dancing. At twelve o'clock some of the company disappeared suddenly, and the mystery was cleared up by the sound of a chorus in the large and echoing hall. It ran thus,—

### THE OLD YEAR.

“Open the door and let me free,  
Here no longer my home may be;  
Slower and slower my pulses beat,  
And I hear the tread of the young heir's feet.



In the strength of his youth he will soon be here,  
And I die when I meet with the young new year.  
He knocks at the gate with impatient hand—  
Days, weeks, and months are his chosen band;  
Fainter my breath comes, fainter and slow,—  
Open the door and let me go ! ”

And in a louder and lighter measure replied,—

#### THE NEW YEAR.

“ Open the door and let me in,  
Ere the first hour of the morn begin.  
Of news I bring ye a marvellous store  
In an unknown book of unstudied lore ;  
The leaves are three hundred and sixty and five,  
Each tells a tale for each man alive.  
If you would from me my knowledge win,  
Open the door and let me in.  
From my mystic volume I'll read ye a tale,  
To make some hearts burn and some hearts quail—  
A tale of bliss, and joy, and woe,  
The mingled web of your life below ;  
For I have flown fast on the wings of the morn.  
The child of Time, and his youngest born,  
Bound to your service, till old and grey,  
I shall die at this hour next New-year's Day.  
If you would from me good service win,  
Open the door and let me in ! ”

And the door was flung wide open, and the New Year entered with a train of the Hours behind him, attired in white and crowned with ivy ; in one hand he held an hour-glass, and in the other the sceptre of his youth, wreathed with the bay and the Christmas holly.

The New Year was invited to sit down to supper, and drink his own health in foaming champagne. The Hours made themselves happy with sandwiches and cold fowl.

Near the end of the table sat that night Miss Trevelyan, Mr. Milner, and Miss Mortimer; they filled their glasses with the rest, and pledged the New Year as they drank.

"This is to me a melancholy season on the whole," said Miss Trevelyan. "I always think New-year's Day a neutral ground: one does not know how to give up the dear old year. The new one is a strange acquaintance as yet."

"I have passed too many of them," said Milner, "not to feel the same, Miss Trevelyan."

"And I too!" half whispered Miss Mortimer.

"You! impossible, yet, my dear Helen! such grave people as Mr. Milner and I are entitled to profess these wise saws, for the good of the young and unwary."

Miss Mortimer thought, "The young! and am I thus careworn and wretched, unobserved by others? Well! it is better so than to be suspected and despised." As she looked up she met the searching eyes of Milner cast upon her, with a look of anxious interest and sad solicitude. She read the tale they told, and again she felt the mystic

and joyous enchantment that for awhile put to flight doubts, fears, and misgivings. She began to speak, to smile, and the spirit of Milner reflected back the brightness that illuminated her own.

He stayed all night at Ellesmere; he returned home the following day, and Miss Mortimer felt uncertain whether they would meet again at that time.

She was almost convinced they would not when, two days after, he refused a pressing invitation to dine at Cotesbrooke.

She had seen the invitation go; after two hours spent in the drawing-room the answer was delivered into Mrs. Talbot's hand, in her presence. Helen continued to look at the piece of worsted-work she held, while Mrs. Talbot discussed a new pattern, crushing, for full five minutes, the note unconsciously in her hand; at last she said,—

“Sorry he can't come; a great pity! Well, I hope Mr. Wargrave will bring some man in his place.” And she proceeded to make *allumettes* of the note.

“I shall never, never see him again!” were the imaginary words in which Miss Mortimer vented the bitterness of her first great grief.

Milner had indeed refused to come on her account; he did not conceal from himself that he felt he had made some strange impression on the mind of Miss Mortimer,

and the enchanting conviction was the more acceptable from its suddenness. He felt that the same spark had ignited her feelings and his own. The whole carried with it the charm of the wildest romance, and the truth of a sober reality. To be loved half-known is the most grateful incense which one human being can offer at the shrine of another. This had been mutually and silently given and taken. Unconsciousness of the fact that we are beloved is quite possible, when we have no interest in discovering it—when we care not for the homage offered; but mutual ignorance of mutual love is one of the most improbable theories in the world.

“The electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound,” is of too highly sensitive a nature to remain obstinately passive under the influence of a touch, so vivifying as that of successful affection.

Milner now made a determination, solemn and firm,—that he would not willingly meet Miss Mortimer again: this was the only course he could follow. He could not think of asking her to be his wife, unless—and his heart filled with wild joy at the bare prospect—unless she should willingly and conscientiously profess the faith he held himself; and if that could be the case, oh what a fate would be his! He had been happy, very happy, in his quiet single life; but Love to come and “crown the sunshine hours!” She,

so excellent, so perfect, so lovely in his eyes, to tread the same path on earth, to win together their way to Heaven!—the thought was full of ecstasy and infinite joy.

Then came the wild improbability of the consummation. Was she not in the hand of Cleveland—the clever, far-sighted, calm, and constant Cleveland! How could he hope to argue and to convince against the efforts of such a master. And she was going at the end of the week—he should not see her again, perhaps, more; and this short episode of unutterable interest was to be crushed back into his soul! She would never know how he had loved her; the memory of him would pass from her mind: he ought to wish that it might.

On Friday, Miss Mortimer was to return to London; she had a slight cold, and could safely plead a bad headache when the rest of the party went out to drive in the afternoon of Thursday. When she was left alone she tried to read: her thoughts wandered; they wandered to the awful fact of never seeing Milner again, and the certainty of meeting Cleveland within a few days.

She rose and walked to the window; the sun was shining, though it was near the hour of his setting. The weather was still, clear, and beautifully calm, though cold. She was haunted with a restless desire to walk, to move, to seek change of scene, and she sud-

denly determined on going out. She did so, and for a moment hesitated where she should go to. As she wandered up and down before the door, she recollected there was one spot which she wished to visit—for she had only seen it at a distance.

In a remote part of the grounds was situated the family burial-place. The mausoleum had been formed partly out of the ruins of an old chapel; there was some fine wood around the spot, and she took a fancy to have a nearer view of the scene than she had yet obtained in passing by.

Thither she accordingly bent her steps; she walked fast, for the crowd of anxious thoughts that pressed on her heart excited in her a sense of nervous and feverish restlessness.

The place was more distant than she had imagined, and she became determined to make out her point; she walked faster and faster, and at last reached the ivied walls. She sat down on the door step, and watched the sun sink behind a group of thick Scotch firs which grew in front of the place that she occupied.

How few suns of the new year had set, and what a changed creature was she! The even stream of her life had been troubled, darkened, and disturbed. She would go home, resume her usual occupations, and her life should be a useful one. And then rose up

before her mind's eye the happy, peaceful home of Milner—with such a future as might, perhaps, perhaps have been hers. These were wild imaginings, and she chased them away. No—her fate was fixed,—her duties were clearly defined. She ought, and she would rejoice that the means were offered her of glorifying the faith she followed by so great an act of penitent self-denial.

She was surprised to find, on looking up, that the grey hue of the winter twilight was already beginning to steal over the leafless scene before her—joyless and dim as her own future existence. She rose hastily and pursued her way home. She had to descend a slight eminence; beneath she saw a figure, the outline of which made her shiver with a sudden fear. He was walking fast, he did not see her, and their road evidently was in the same direction. She reached it first, and without looking round quickly walked on;—but her heart beat with wild vibrations, and fear took entire possession of her, when she heard behind a quick step that gained rapidly upon her.

“Miss Mortimer!” said the voice of Milner; she turned round and held out her hand,—they walked on together in the direction of the house of Cotesbrooke.

## CHAPTER VIII.

MISS MORTIMER did not come down to dinner on Thursday,—she had a headache, and had over-fatigued herself by walking in the morning while they were all out.

“Very foolish of her to go out, with a cold coming on,” said Mrs. Trevelyan.

“By-the-by,” said Mrs. Talbot, “did you hear that the Wargraves have lost their uncle, old Mr. Woodford? We heard of it to-day—from Mr. Milner, was’nt it?” she said, turning to her husband; “for I did not speak to him to-day. He was walking off in a great hurry, in a contrary direction from where we were. I fancy he was going to Oakfield.”

Milner was not going there, but he had been very anxious to escape meeting the carriages, in one of which he believed Miss Mortimer to be.

Late in the evening Miss Mortimer came down stairs; she sat almost in the dark, with a book in her hand. Her eyes were full of the traces of heavy tears, but she was still supposed to be suffering from a bad



cold and headache, which accounted for her pale face, and excused her from joining the round game of cards with which the rest beguiled the evening hours.

She sat quiet, listening to the gay and cheerful voices, the laughter, the idle merriment of the happy and youthful circle at a round-table in the distance.

“Oh, Heaven!” she thought, “were these careless and lively creatures of the same nature as herself? It was better, indeed, to retire to the shade offered by the home of Cleveland, than thus remain in a sunshine which had only the effect of increasing and embittering her sufferings.” Well, her sufferings were intense; but it was for conscience sake that she suffered. Heaven owed her, she might therefore trust, some peace of mind, to soothe and bless her after-life. In thought she contemplated the hours of prayer and penance, that should make amends for the grievous sins she had been guilty of—for guilty she had been. She had longed, led on by a sudden and earthly passion, to cast from her the fetters—such she dared to think them—which her Church, by the authorised hand of Cleveland, had wound round her soul. Her soul! yes, it was the immortal portion of her being that Cleveland sought to save and keep to all eternity.

“What is a man advantaged, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”

was to her a test of fearful power. It spoke to her in a voice of thunder, and haunted her of late, by day and by night.

"Well!" she thought, as she silently wiped the tears that would fall that evening, while she sat apart, "it is the bondage of a few short years, then comes the glorious hour of freedom. But then, the reason that separates us here must hold good to all eternity; or else—or else it is no reason at all while we remain on earth: they must stand and fall together. And Milner, such a one as he is—is he indeed rejected of God? cast out because he stands without the pale of a visible Church?" She shuddered to find she stood, impelled by earthly love, on the brink of unbelief and infidelity. She covered her face with her hands: still she did not dare at that instant to pray—she was not in the obedient frame of mind necessary to make her prayers acceptable. Thus rejecting at the first step the unchangeable truths she had been so firmly persuaded of once;—once! ah, yes! It was her overpowering passion that led her captive, not the desire of knowing the truth.

"I am bound captive by the strong cords of sin, and I cannot expect at once to free myself from the awful temptation I have yielded to." Thus she thought again and again. "But still I may come as a penitent to the feet of the Holy Church, whose

authority and infallibility I have, like a sinner, presumed to doubt. She, the Mother of my Life, is forgiving to those who repent and believe, and turn from the wickedness they have, perhaps, wilfully indulged in."

When she raised her head suddenly from the reclining position in which she had held it for a minute or two, she found a letter lying on the small work-table at her side. A servant had come in, and without disturbing her, as there was no answer, he had put it where she would certainly see it.

She took it into her hand and looked at the writing, the seal—they were those of Milner. She knew the firm decided hand, it was of a peculiar character. She pressed it wildly in her clasped hands for an instant, then, seeing she was unobserved, she went out of the room and flew to her own. She locked her door, and, undisturbed, she tore it open. Her eyes failed her, her head swam, as she looked on the first words of love ever addressed to her by any human being; and she felt she had now, at least, one tangible proof of the affection that was worth all the world to her.

Milner's letter was short, but evidently written under the pressure of a firm determination, and the conflict waged by love and a sense of the duty required of him.

In few, but ardent words, he expressed his unalterable affection for her—owned he

had done wrong in allowing himself to be betrayed into a confession of its power ; their sudden meeting, their lonely walk, their speedy and inevitable separation, must bear the blame together with his own weakness. Then he alluded to their mutual position ; he said it was impossible, perfectly impossible, he could think of the great happiness of making her his wife, under the conviction that they could not unite in one faith, one hope, one spiritual life. In his situation it was still less to be thought of than had he been in any other profession than the one he had chosen, from the sense of its happiness and holiness. He did not believe anything would act in the way of conversion to his own persuasion on her mind, but a true and full sense of the real light to be enjoyed by the change ; that that change might take place he would pray with all his soul, apart, he dared to believe, from any selfish ideas.

At the end of the letter he indulged in one short tribute to the love he felt for her, though it was easy to see it was carefully, and almost coldly, worded. He said :—“ Whatever might be the future convictions of her mind, whatever might be the result of the next few months, or years, the fate of his affection was fixed for ever. She must ever occupy the place she held there—in a heart that had never before felt the power of any other earthly love so strongly.” He did not

sign his name, for he did not choose to put down anything short of what he knew he felt for her he wrote to.

She read this letter once, and twice, and remained more stupified than agitated. She had reached the state of hardly knowing what she felt. She almost longed for an encounter with Cleveland, that opposition—indignation, perhaps—might excite her numbed heart, and allow her eyes to “rain out the heavy mist of tears” that had now settled on her brain.

She returned to town next morning. They slept a night on the road, and late on Saturday night she arrived in Queen Anne Street.

It was snowing, the street looked unutterably dismal. Hardy received her with the news that Mrs. Cleveland was not well.

“Very poorly, indeed,” he said; and she went up stairs to the drawing-room: there was no fire, as Mrs. Cleveland was in her own room, and had been there all day. She was asked what she would have; she replied “Tea, or anything they chose,” and then she went into Mrs. Cleveland’s room.

It was half-past nine. Mrs. Cleveland was in bed, the curtains drawn all round, and from behind them came a sad and discontented voice,—

“Well, here you are, my dear! I’ve had a most frightful cold, and still have a bad cough.”

Miss Mortimer expressed a penitent sense of sorrow, for Mrs. Cleveland always complained of bodily ailment as if it was the special fault of the one she bemoaned herself to.

“ Henry comes, I think, next week : you’ll find a letter from him in my work-table drawer. He has not been well at all, either. It has been horrid weather, it seems, everywhere. You may read his letter if you like; there’s not much in it, only all he’s been about—working himself to death, I dare say. Well, don’t let me keep you, my dear; get something comfortable. Do go to bed : how tired you must be ! Well, good night ! ”

Miss Mortimer retired, and found Hardy on the stairs. There were but melancholy prospects, he seemed to think, of a comfortable supper ; no chops, and a small remains of Mrs. Cleveland’s cold fowl.

What there was, was laid out with tea in the dining-room. She went down, and felt fully the unequalled dismal dulness of the scene, after the gay bright dwelling she left, full of luxury and comfort, and the sound of young merry voices. But not at Cotesbrooke did her memory linger long. Her heart flew to the cheerful sunny home of Milner ; the beautiful little vicarage, the lovely spot where lived the angel of her imagination. She tried to check the sinful yearning, for

Cleveland's work. She heard a step on the stair, and before she could have time to rise even from her seat, Cleveland was in the room. It was quite daylight still, and he saw her face; the sudden change in his, and look of surprise, told her immediately he had noticed the ravages that weeks of anxiety and miserable sleeplessness had made in her appearance. This made her shrink from his scrutiny. She hardly spoke, and sat down again immediately after shaking hands with Cleveland.

He sat down opposite to her, and had she seen the look of anxious kindness he bent upon her, her heart would have been touched and softened by the interest it displayed.

Cleveland felt dismayed at the sudden and extraordinary change in her manner and looks. He almost allowed the words, "What is it?" to escape from his lips, as he watched her sitting silently engaged with thin and trembling hands over a piece of work. The silence became to him intolerable, and he rose and left the room. Miss Mortimer felt relieved of the heavy weight of his presence, and immediately ran up stairs to her own room.

There she stayed till dinner was announced, and then came down. She entered the drawing-room, and found Mrs. Cleveland was to dine in her room. She had to spend nearly an hour alone with

Cleveland. Choking with fear, and the anxiety of hiding what she felt, she tried to speak, but whenever she raised her eyes to the face of Cleveland they fell again, struck to the earth by the piercing, anxious, inquiring glance of his.

At last she was released. "What must he think of me!" she thought, as she remained silent, unemployed by the light of the fire, in the room above where he was arranging some of his books and papers.

He came up at nine; his usual hour of doing so. He remembered the time when her face had brightened at his entrance; and when he saw her turn away with a tear-stained face, a bitter sense of the change, of her loss of confidence in him, swept over his usually calm and composed spirit, with a shade of injustice attached to Miss Mortimer's conduct.

Still he would not speak—not yet, at least—not yet. Tea came; she made it, took in a cup for Mrs. Cleveland, and returned to the drawing-room.

She spoke of indifferent subjects, but there was a tone in her voice which fell dismally on the heart of Cleveland. She was wretched, and he could not make out the reason why. He would give her four-and-twenty hours; and if she did not tell him then of her own accord what had caused her misery, he was entitled, in every way, to ask



her. He half wished for, he half shrunk from the task, but he would fulfil his determination ; on that he was resolved. Later in the evening she was reading, her head bent down over a book. Cleveland then for several minutes contemplated her. What had come over her? she sat in a languid attitude, that expressed of itself a mind worn out and deeply dejected. She looked up vacantly from the book she had, he saw not, been reading—she met his eye directed to her face, and in confusion sought to avoid it. She rose and went to the piano, and her fingers wandered listlessly over the keys. At last they fell into one of the chants Cleveland had said he liked. She went on playing ; it brought to her mind the night before Cleveland had gone away. She remembered the sorrow she had then felt ; by comparison, her feelings now appeared almost like hatred. She made an excuse of a headache to go to her room, and Cleveland was left alone.

He was lost in a maze of conjectures, grief, and concern ; and he also felt deeply hurt at the loss he had experienced of the confidence he once held so fully. He felt that it was unjust, and cruelly ungrateful ; still he would have patience. He began to wonder where she had been, what she had seen, who she had met during his absence. He remembered hearing she had gone for a

few days to the country : it now occurred to him she had been strangely silent on the subject ; here was the first point unravelled, there was the seat of the mischief. He was resolved to come at the truth ; he could not rest till he had done so, and he determined that another night should not pass without his making at least an attempt to have a full confession from Miss Mortimer.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE next morning Miss Mortimer went down, prepared to act her part to perfection during the time she should be in Cleveland's presence. She tried hard to stifle the voice of her conscience; if she gave way to her feelings, all concealment was over: she was so convinced of her wickedness and folly that she thought, for the present, it was no use thinking of either until the first tempest had swept over her; then she prophesied to herself, hours, days, years, of bitter penance and remorse. And for Milner—ah! for Milner, what? For him she painted different futures, according to the mood she was in. Sometimes she tried to imagine him happy in the affection of another; again, for ever hers, alone living for her sake a solitary and loveless life.

Continually her thoughts hovered round one subject; for ever the image of the absent Milner was at her side.

The day passed over, the hour of dinner, and she went up stairs—not to the drawing-

room, but to a small room where she wrote in general,—it opened off the apartment where they usually sat. Mrs. Cleveland had not come down to dinner; she went into the smaller room, and had scarcely put down her candle and closed the door, when she heard the step of Cleveland on the stair: it was unusual his coming up at that hour. He went to the door of the drawing-room, for an instant stopped, and then came towards the spot where she was: she knew he was coming, and an instinctive fear told her what for. Terror took possession of her, she wished to leave the chair where she sat, and she could not.

Cleveland came in, he put down the light he held and shut the door, and sat down beside her. His heart beat with dread, for he hardly knew how to begin, and he knew not what he might be going to hear. Miss Mortimer sat trembling and silent, waiting for his first words.

He spoke first, "Helen, you are unhappy; I see it; I know it: do not attempt to deny what is true. I have every right to know what is making you so miserable; have the confidence in me you once had—that you had when I left you a few short weeks ago." He spoke almost humbly, still she did not answer.

"Speak to me, at least," he said, with more of command in his tone than he had

as yet assumed; still she remained silent. He got up and took two turns up and down the room; then he stood near her again, as if expecting an answer. It was a vain appeal; she could not speak.

He summoned courage, and said at last, "You have, I suppose, met with some circumstance — or some — some person who has made you wish to leave me — this house — your present manner of life. Remember, I told you, you might marry; and although you replied then——"

She interrupted him by bursting into tears; he stopped, and remained perfectly still. Then he said, "Your silence and your grief tell me I have guessed right; I can only say, there is, I believe, nothing on the earth I would not do, that I might, to make you happy. There is only one thing I will never do, and that is, relinquish the claim to advise and urge you on the side of duty, while you are here under my charge."

"I know that, therefore it is no use speaking of what it would give you no pleasure to hear."

"It will give me satisfaction to know your mind is relieved of a burden apparently too heavy to bear." He softened his tone suddenly, and said, in the accent of tender kindness, "Trust in me; why refuse me the happiness of trying to help, to comfort, to

lead you? I cannot, if I know not the circumstances in which you are placed: you may have exaggerated them to yourself." He took hold of her chill hand and said once more, "Speak to me at least." He stopped, and at last said, "Tell me his name."

The suddenness of the awful question she knew was coming stunned her so, that she could not speak for a moment or two.

"Tell me his name," again said Cleveland. "He is a Protestant, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Miss Mortimer.

"Of what line? in what profession?"

"A clergyman," replied Helen.

Cleveland felt a thrill at the idea of having an impossibility in his favour. She could never marry on the only terms in which a Protestant clergyman could take her for his wife; there was less danger in that extreme case than where she might have been allowed to keep up a half-and-half species of conformity to her religion, ending, perhaps, in indifference and total apostasy.

"Now, his name?" said Cleveland. He did not wish to let the crisis escape. He might not be able to renew it so easily. "His name?—I must know it from yourself or others;" said Cleveland, kindly and firmly.

"Mr. Milner," replied Miss Mortimer, faltering in voice as she pronounced it; for

it rung strangely in her ears pronounced by herself, so seldom had she dared to use it.

"Where did you meet?" asked Cleveland.

"In Devonshire, and in London," replied Helen.

"Where does he live?"

"Ellesmere," was the simple answer.

"And he," said Cleveland, with some hesitation for a moment, "and he has told you he prefers you! He has, perhaps, written to you?"

"He has."

"I must then ask you for his letter: I wish to know what he proposes, what he wishes you to do. You will give it me, I am sure," he said kindly.

"It is here," said Miss Mortimer, and she took it from the folds of her gown, where she had hidden it.

Cleveland took it, and for an instant held it in his hand and looked at it; unfolded the sheet, and from within there fell on the ground some withered ivy leaves. He stooped and picked them up in silence. Miss Mortimer never moved; he replaced the leaves in the cover, folded the letter and returned it, saying, "I trust to your truth."

Miss Mortimer took it, and held it in her hand.

"He will not accept you, I suppose, without converting you first to his own persuasion?"

The words "accept you" roused no proud anger.

"We have no intention of marrying, Mr. Cleveland," said Miss Mortimer.

"That is well," said Cleveland, in an agitated voice. "You do not correspond?"

"No."

"You never will?" he insisted.

"That — that depends ——" said Miss Mortimer.

"On what?" said Cleveland, quickly.

"You need not fear Mr. Milner," said Miss Mortimer, almost proudly. "You have seen him — you have met him abroad, once: he told me so."

Cleveland clasped his hands in the consternation that accompanied the sudden recollection of Cecil Milner, as he had seen him sixteen years before. Again he stood before him as the night they had parted — his matchless and peculiar beauty, his pleasing voice, his unassuming and gentle manners. On what vantage ground did he, must he, thus stand in the imagination of a girl of nineteen!

"I remember," replied Cleveland. "I have never met him since. He was then a very gentlemanlike and intelligent young man. I feel sure, what could impress such a mind as yours with a decided preference must be admirable in itself, however unfortunate these circumstances may be, however



adverse to the accomplishment of the wishes of both."

"Adverse, indeed!" replied Miss Mortimer.

She saw in Cleveland's manner kind concern for herself, and his statement was a just one: it was impossible to hope for any other conclusion. She had in imagination looked on Cleveland as an enemy, but he appeared in the light of a sympathising friend, now that he had spoken to her at last.

"I have been so—so wretched!" said Miss Mortimer. "I have been so very miserable!"—her desire for the relief of confidence came over her heart more fully every moment—"I have, I acknowledge, most wickedly murmured at the cause that separates us. I have been so ungrateful as to doubt the entire necessity. Had you seen yourself, Mr. Cleveland, the excellence, the undeniable goodness and usefulness of that life——"

"I am fully aware of all that has impressed you so deeply," said Cleveland. "No one is more sensible than I am myself of the high position many have obtained, deprived though they be of the one sure foundation on which we, Helen, have built our hopes for eternity. There is no subject so painful as the vain struggles of unassisted nature after the true light they cannot hope to reach, except through the one way opened, we thank God, to us."

Miss Mortimer did not answer. She covered her face with her hands, but the tears fell through her fingers, and she wiped them at last.

"This grief is natural," said Cleveland, in a low voice; "but it must not be indulged. There are years, if it please God, before you. Time—time and change of the bitterness of feeling that now fills your heart. You must forget him."

She raised her face and solemnly said, "Forget him! Never!"

"You must try," replied Cleveland.

"I do not wish to succeed. No, Mr. Cleveland, of that you cannot persuade me. I can suffer—I can die—but I do not wish to forget."

She spoke once more in the defensive, and Cleveland felt it.

"I speak for your own sake only," he answered; and at once disarmed her rising excitement by the gentleness with which he spoke to her.

He turned away then, and took up the light as if about to go. She looked up to his face, and he held out his hand.

"Good night," he said, pressing hers. "I thank you for your confidence; it has made me happier. I pity—I pity you both. You must look on it in the light of a misfortune; not irreparable, if you never meet again. Your marriage would be destructive

to both. He would lose the respect, the useful influence he may probably possess amongst his own class. Your differences would end in utter misery, and the best your husband could make of it would be to entice you to an apostasy, I trust in God, your reason and your faith would condemn. Pray, Helen, to be protected from this unnatural position ; pray to be delivered from the heavy bondage of a heart the slave of a short-lived passion, dangerous and disgraceful to yield to. This is enough. We shall never speak about this again, as far as my wishes are concerned."

He went away, leaving Miss Mortimer to think over his last words. They were awfully true, she felt. She had, indeed, fallen down to worship before an idol ; she had despised the voice of prudence—and worse, that of conscience. She had willingly advanced to the brink of a precipice, and must withdraw as quickly and as safely as she could. She must remove the image that stood between Heaven and her soul ; and that must be done by prayer, penitence, and the exercise of a humble and childlike obedience. She would shew Cleveland she wished to follow the line he had laid down for her practice, and really desired to obtain the peace of mind he promised as the reward of her faith.

## CHAPTER. X.

IF Cleveland wished not to renew the subject with Miss Mortimer, his desire was gratified; for she never spoke again in any way directly of the grief that lay heavy at her heart—for many weeks, at least.

The time passed on—days grew into weeks, weeks into months—and the spring came at last, the early spring. She longed to see the face of the country again. She had passed the winter almost in total seclusion; she had almost given up speaking to the Trevelyans even. She found, however, in Cleveland the most anxious and tender friend. He watched her very countenance to find out what would please and soothe her. He considered her—connected as she was with him, thrown as she had been by Providence under his care—as the charge he should devote his attention especially to, at that time particularly. She was weak in body and mind; her grief acted on both as keenly as the very hour she had parted with the cause of her misery. Cleveland still

dwelt on the hope held out by Time, the great destroyer and soother of our existence—the bane and balm to the wound he himself inflicts in his course. She would forget him surely, at last, he thought, with a mixed feeling of the chance of her being forgotten—of Milner marrying another. He believed it would be the best cure; and yet how could he wish to inflict so agonising a blow on a heart so helpless, and so crushed already by its own constancy in suffering?

He frequently spoke with her on the only subject capable of rousing her from the stupor into which she had fallen,—the glories of eternity for those found faithful, and worthy to enjoy the blessings promised to those patient in well doing. Often the last hour they spent together in the evening, before they parted—not both—to the rest of sleep, Cleveland would read to her some portions of the Scriptures she especially loved. The call, the tender appeal, of “the Good Shepherd” softened her heart—“Come unto me all ye that labour,” spoke affectionate reproaches of her unbelief and ungrateful murmurings. The words so often read to her, “Be of good cheer, it is I,” touched her soul at times with the conviction that want of faith was the cause of her misery. The voice of the Redeemer still addressed her through the medium of the Church he had founded for the sake of his people, and

at times she feared as much his truth as did the sinking disciple when meeting his Lord on the stormy water.

One night Cleveland read to her a passage chosen from the Revelation. He read those words of awful beauty descriptive of the "Holy City, the new Jerusalem," from whose glorious limits are excluded the "fearful and unbelieving." She looked up in his face with an expression of sudden anguish and dismay.

"It cannot, cannot be!" she said, in a trembling voice. "God looks at the heart; he accepts in all persuasions those who trust in his mercy."

"It is a frightful risk for the soul to run, at any rate," said Cleveland. "I will not absolutely condemn; while there is life there is hope. The faithless may return to their allegiance: they must come as the Prodigal Son to a merciful and forgiving parent. But, mark you, they *must come*."

"And if they do not? if—*if* they do not," said Miss Mortimer, looking wildly in his face, "is there no hope?"

"None," said Cleveland. "'Whosoever cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' But all must come."

"But how can it be that the good fruits of holiness can be sent forth from a corrupt tree?" she asked anxiously.

"'We walk by faith and not by sight,'"

said Cleveland, solemnly. "The good works of the young man 'whom Jesus loved' were of no avail. He went so far and no further. He would not give up all he had and follow him; he wished to serve in his own way. There are other things our hearts hold dearer than gold and silver. Our own will, our own prejudices, and want of faith, we will not—unassisted we cannot—lay down on the altar of God. It is possible to go three-quarters of the way and never accomplish the great end we have in view. We have all great need to watch and pray that we fail not in our faith at the eleventh hour. 'Whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be my disciple.'"

Miss Mortimer remained lost in thought. The mystic barrier Cleveland erected round the Church he served so faithfully was the subject that caused her unparalleled agony. Milner excluded by the faith he professed! she herself, with a yearning tie, her false and treacherous heart to stray beyond the limits of safety! That night she spoke no more, but she thanked Cleveland for his kindness and patience.

"Patience!" he said. "Would to Heaven I had never more cause to practise it! I have on earth no greater happiness than the belief that you trust me and believe my words are those of everlasting truth." "Imperfect, indeed," he thought as she left

the room for the night: "imperfect as the words of man; but, thank God, I believe they are the faint echoes of His own."

Cleveland preached in the chapel in ——— Street at that time. His eloquence and fervent energy clothed his arguments in a garb most attractive to more than those who held the Roman Catholic faith. Many, many came to listen; even to those whom he did not convince, his preaching was, indeed, as "the lovely song of one who hath a pleasant voice." His fame extended, and the pride of the man might have been fully gratified by the success of the priest. There is no triumph so complete as that of a powerful and popular preacher. He holds possession of the spell of excitement—temporary, perhaps—but still excitement of the noblest kind. He at once lays hold of the better points even of the imagination—sanctifying its energy, for the time at least; and, above all, he stands invested with the weapons put into his hands by the occasional terrors the most unthinking have shrunk from at times. He stands aloof for a short space, as if addressing his hearers from the solemn light of eternity; as if he almost stood on that shore all are bound for, and thence sent forth his voice to those still floating on the troubled ocean of time and its feverish vanities.

Miss Mortimer attended the services of

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the chapel regularly. She felt frequently, at last almost constantly, that the eloquence, the arguments, the solemnly persuasive words of Cleveland, were addressed to her own case. At such times her heart would indeed burn within her. She would try to rouse her energies to listen to and worthily to receive the words of eternal life. "It is for me—to me he speaks—he writes—he preaches. Others in the same case his powerful and urgent appeals may touch," she often thought, "but I feel I am in his mind. Ah, Cleveland! how can I waste the precious hours in listless and miserable repinings?" After thus thinking, she would rouse herself by a desperate effort, and Cleveland would look happier; unless he perceived too visibly the effort it cost her to do so.

In the month of May, Miss Mortimer was very unwell. She had been labouring under a severe cold for several weeks. She had neglected it, and she became seriously ill. Towards the end of May she got so much better that she was able to leave her room; then Cleveland determined his mother and Miss Mortimer should go to the sea-side. It was likely to do her more good than any thing else. After some persuasion, Mrs. Cleveland was induced to consent, and they left London to spend six weeks at a small village on the coast of Sussex.

Cleveland accompanied them, and made

all things as comfortable as he could. In two days he left them and returned to London, promising to return whenever he could.

The place he had chosen was a small village in a remote corner of the coast, several miles from any large town; there were only a dozen houses belonging to the poorer class, and at a distance one or two gentlemen's seats. The house in which lodged Mrs. Cleveland and her young friend was a small comfortable dwelling, with a neat little garden behind, and in front rolled the sea. Elm Cottage was not a stone's throw from the beach.

The change of scene—the sudden view of that most glorious sight, a boundless ocean, unlimited by another shore apparently—gave a feeling of most exquisite pleasure at first to Miss Mortimer. She went down in the evening, half an hour after their arrival, with Cleveland to the shore. The tide was coming up, the sands glittering with the evening sun on their wet surface, the sky was clear, the sea only roused from a calm by a light breeze from the west.

“Oh, Mr. Cleveland, this is the happiest hour I have spent for many months!” said Helen.

With sudden, joyful surprise, he clasped her hands in his, and he thought that the desire of his present life was accomplished.

He said nothing, and Miss Mortimer remained silent too. She sat down on a mass of stones, and together they watched the tide roll up, retire, and again approach the high watermark that bounded its course.

"It makes me think of some words I read not long ago," said Miss Mortimer, and she repeated slowly,—

"As sweeps the troubled ocean  
Towards a sunny shore,  
To find upon its bosom  
A charm unknown before ;  
So may, O God, the tempests  
That shake my weary breast,  
Find, as they turn towards Thee,  
As sure and final rest."

"And yet," she added, mournfully, "it is not so—it is not a final rest ; the tide will roll wildly to and fro, and I ——"

"Yes," said Cleveland, "the tides will roll, the face of the waters vary with storm and sunshine, till the day when there 'will be no more sea.' 'Image of unrest,' it has no answering type in the new heavens and the new earth. But till the time appointed we must—we must submit to the variations even of our own best feelings. If we have cast anchor on the true foundation, the ship may ride in safety, though the storms may toss her on the station she has chosen and kept."

"I believe that is true," said Miss Mortimer.

In two days Cleveland returned to town.

Dreadfully did Helen miss his presence. She felt faith, courage, and constancy waver in his absence. His society had now for her an inexpressible feeling of protection and safety attached to it. She was beyond measure glad to feel this. She thought herself in a fair way to recover the senses she felt still wander woefully to other scenes and hopes of a more earthly character.

One evening she was walking on the beach alone. She had recovered her strength partly, and had been able to wander further on than usual. She saw the lodge gates leading up to a pretty small villa, belonging to a gentleman of the name of Elmore. She went slowly towards it, and coming down the avenue, beneath the shade of the flowering lilac and laburnum trees, she saw two gentlemen. She remained on the spot incapable of moving, when in one she recognised Milner.

The miraculous fact of his being so near her, so unexpectedly close to her, deprived her of the power of thinking for an instant. It has been well said, that a sudden meeting—an unexpected glimpse of the object “of our romantic affections”—bursts upon the senses “with the awfulness of a phantom.” In Miss Mortimer’s case it was so. Trembling in every fibre of her frame, gasping convulsively for breath, her eyes

dimmed as if by a flash of lightning, she turned away, unseen by Milner, and walked quickly back to her home.

She felt as if she had escaped from some imminent danger, and yet she had only seen the one she loved—as she could love, but once in her life.

It was a stunning blow to find herself cast down as low as before—to find one instant of the reality of his presence had undone the imaginary rejection of his image—in which, moreover, she had never yet perfectly succeeded.

She spent hours that sleepless night of misery darker than before. She went to the window and flung it wide open, and she looked out on the sea,—

“ The starry Night in her gala dress,  
And the bright and peaceful flood.”

The voice of the ocean murmured in her ears like the sullen sentence of an irresistible fate; its ceaseless changes were the type of her own disquieted and unequal life. The silver glow of the moonlight and starlight impressed her heart with no idea of calm repose, for there are moments when the beauty and majesty of nature appeal to the feverish soul in vain; the miserable spirit feels the vast universe an awful and voiceless solitude: for at such times the “still small voice,” in which speaks the com-

fort of God, is drowned by the maddening uproar of the passions ; and until that sinks into submissive silence there is no peace—no rest—to be found in communion with Nature in her solitude.

The next day she was unable to leave the house ; the following evening Cleveland was to come from London. They had been at the sea-side a month, in ten days they would be going home again.

The morning of the day that Cleveland was to arrive she went out for a short time. She passed by a small shop kept by a widow woman, to whom she had spoken sometimes. She went in for an instant, and Mrs. Everitt offered her some of the goods for purchase. She dealt in shells—curiosities from “foreign parts,” as she said—and the coral fans and shell-work her two sons (seafaring men) brought home from their different voyages.

Mrs. Everitt put into her hand a beautiful polished shell. “A lovely thing—very cheap,” she assured her. “Mrs. Elmore, at the Lodge, had brought two gentlemen there—twice. Mr. Milner, a cousin of her husband’s, had bought one the exact match.” Miss Mortimer paid the price asked, and hurried from the shop with the prize in her hand.

That night, late, Cleveland came. He looked very unhappy. When Mrs. Cleve-

land had left the room he said, in an agitated voice,—

“ I have received a sudden call to go abroad. I go to Paris next month, on the 7th—that is, Thursday week. I hope to return soon, but that must depend on others. I hope, I trust, soon to be allowed to return.”

A strange sensation filled the heart of Miss Mortimer ; a mixture of sorrow, consternation, and sudden joy. She felt horrified at the idea of “ freedom,” which rushed over her soul, in spite of the concern she felt at losing the support of Cleveland’s society.

She said, “ I hope, indeed, you will soon come back to us.”

Cleveland felt that, with one rapid glance, he could not help comparing this chill regret with the warm expressions of concern at his departure she had made use of before he went to Ireland. A cold sense of her ingratitude—of the change in her feelings towards him—stole over his heart, and he said no more.

In the course of a week they all returned to London. The heat and noise were inexpressibly wearisome to Miss Mortimer, and she longed earnestly to be in the country again.

On Thursday, the 7th, Cleveland was to leave England. To leave his home was evidently a great and painful effort. The night

before his departure he came into the drawing-room, and sat down with a book. Near him sat Miss Mortimer. She wished to speak to him, but he seemed disinclined to speak.

At last she said, "You will write to us soon, Mr. Cleveland?"

He started, and looked at her.

"And you—will you write to me? May I hope to hear from you sometimes? It will be my only, my greatest happiness."

"I will certainly write," she replied. "How kind you are to take such interest in me!"

He closed his book, rose, and began to walk about the room. He seemed anxious to speak and unable to accomplish it.

"Promise me at least," he said, after some minutes' silence—"promise me you will not let any influence act upon you in my absence. I trust to your honour, to your truth, to hold this promise sacred. I have toiled—prayed—prayed. I have spent hours of prayer in your behalf. You will not play me false now—now—after we have spent together so many happy hours of confidence and everlasting affection. You are the centre round which cling all the earthly interests of my life. I found you, my nearest by the ties of blood, left alone, deserted, ignorant. I claimed you as mine—you have been the thought and charge of my mind for



years now. To make you happy in this world, blessed in that to come, is the most earnest desire of my heart. I have no fear for you, if you are true to yourself and faithful to the promise you have given me not to allow your principles, your convictions, unworthily to sink beneath the spells of earthly feeling. This remember, that 'the time is short.' You stand on the right path that leads to peace here and eternal life hereafter. It is at your own peril that you will dare to forsake it. Think of me when I am gone, for there is no other that has more your interest at heart, whose prayers will ascend more unceasingly for your welfare."

He left her without waiting for an answer. He had in the last words he used touched on all the subjects most calculated to subdue the heart and feelings of Miss Mortimer. His care, his pity, his unceasing attention to her well-being and happiness; his affectionate interest, his allusion to their family connexion (she had so few, that she valued them the more), and the parting injunction, "It is at your own peril you will dare to forsake" the path he had laid down for her safe passage through the perils of life—the entreaty to be remembered—the assurance that he united her name in his most solemn appeals to Heaven with every request he made known to the God he served so faithfully—all these ideas fell with touching

power on the heart of Helen Mortimer, and threw over the parting hour with Cleveland an impression of solemnity that was almost awful.

He left at an early hour next morning, and Miss Mortimer felt the void his absence made almost unbearable at first.

The following week she, for the first time for many weeks, went to visit the Trevelyans. They were overjoyed to see her again among them. They never ventured to question her on the reason of her long absence from their house; they considered her religion accounted for every thing that was inexplicable to them.

She found, indeed, it was a great relief now and then to spend some hours with the Trevelyans. It was a rest to her wearied heart, exhausted with the violence of its own warfare, to associate with the happy, unthinking, simple-minded young girls, who asked no questions, and were always glad to see her whenever she chose to come.

About this time Mrs. Cleveland had a visit from a distant connexion, an Irish friend, an elderly lady, who kept her in such high good humour that she did not want Miss Mortimer's company, even to detail her bodily ailments to. Thus she was left with much unoccupied time; the society of the Irish friend she could take no pleasure in; she frequently went to the Trevelyans, and

by degrees she became acquainted with many of their friends.

She found that the days she spent there were at last becoming the most peaceful of her life. Alone in her sad solitude, there arose at times tempests of grief, despair, and earthly repinings, that shook her faint heart to its very core. The every-day "talk," the commonplace occupations that surrounded her at the Trevelyans, she found were great assistances in the way of calming her soul into stupor sometimes. Alone with Cleveland, her very agonies and miseries had been turned to account by him, in the way of leading her on with his train of thoughts, which ever aspired to a better and happier world to come. She lived with him in an upper region—above, as it were, the common sorrows and frail longings of a perishing earth; but now that he was gone, that she was left quite alone, she felt the horror of one abandoned in the darkness to all the agonies of superstitious fear and insane despair.

Yet, strange to say, she had no definite longing for his return. No! she looked not above, directly to Heaven, for help, for hope; she had been too long accustomed to hang on the aid offered by the daily society of one she believed a visible guide for her through a weary wilderness: but she looked—(almost unconscious was she of the fact, how-

ever,)—she looked to another, whom she in her heart believed all perfect and excellent, the one who realised her visions of romantic affection and spiritual adoration.

Yet when her eyes were opened, at times, to the knowledge of her own extreme danger, she shrunk back from the awful temptation; she owned to herself it was almost too much for her to endure. Once make up her mind to forget Cleveland, to cast aside his warnings and commands, to burst the mystic barrier that he had impressed on her mind, could alone ensure the safety of her soul. And what a sunny scene of love and happiness lay spread before her! Oh, how often did she blame herself for venturing so near the limits of that enchanted land! There did her imagination paint the happy home ready for her—the years spent, perhaps, at the side of Cecil; for at such moments she found his Christian name rose to her lips as she would then be entitled to pronounce it.

## CHAPTER XI.

WEEKS and months rolled over the heavy head and heart of Miss Mortimer; time was for her a sluggish stream, on which she floated slowly on, not caring where or how.

She continued to visit at the Trevelyans. The Irish friend remained for the winter with Mrs. Cleveland, and Miss Mortimer was less wanted than ever in consequence.

One day (it was in the month of December, the 12th) she went to spend the morning with Frances Trevelyan—the rest were all out: the two companions had not been together above ten minutes, when Miss Trevelyan said,—

“Oh! do you know you will be sorry to hear that our friend Cecil Milner is ill—very ill, I am afraid; he will probably go abroad soon for his health. I fear it's being too late.”

One convulsion of the agony of fear passed through the heart of Helen, and she fainted.

Miss Trevelyan rose up in the wildest surprise and agitation. She restored Miss

Mortimer to her senses, and when she had done so, Helen went home directly; the only words she exchanged with her friend were, "You have, of course, guessed my misfortune; you will respect my misery, and keep my secret."

The next Sunday, Miss Mortimer attended morning and afternoon service in the church where sat the Trevelyan; the younger girls touched each other, and half smiled. The eyes of Miss Trevelyan were bent down—she never looked once in the face of Miss Mortimer; but as they came out of church she walked quickly after her, clasped her hand warmly and said, "God bless you, dearest Helen!" Miss Mortimer did not answer, and turned away quickly. Every Sunday she attended the service regularly. The preaching of the clergyman there was not particularly striking, but she did not seem to mind that; no one came more constantly to hear him.

Mrs. Cleveland understood that she had found out some "very striking speaker," who pleased her better than the person who had replaced Cleveland: the Irish lady never intruded herself in any way on her confidence.

The Trevelyan asked her no questions, indeed they seldom saw her now.

Once, only once, Annie Trevelyan ventured to say, "Aha! I wonder what Mr. Cleveland will say when he comes back?"

"When he comes back!" thought Miss Mortimer: she trusted in reality to be far from his influence and authority. She wrote to him sometimes, kind and calm letters, for she had now bent all the energies of her mind in concealing the course she had in view. She refused to think over her own state: she kept before her eyes one goal. She preserved one passionate hope for ever speaking in her ear. She silenced her conscience, and held on her way without looking to the right or left. She had endeavoured to "fight the good fight of faith:" it was no use, and she lay down every night after one hurried prayer addressed to the God she hoped was a God of mercy: more, at present, she was determined not to dwell upon.

In the month of April, Miss Trevelyan, after many, many deliberations, wrote to her friend Milner. She begged his forgiveness for interfering where she had no direct concern—she had few words to say: if she were wrong, no harm was done; if she were right, she need make no more excuses to him at least. Miss Mortimer had, to all intents and purposes, joined the Protestant Church.

By the next post she received an answer, thanking her cordially for her kind interest.

The same day Miss Mortimer received one from him too. She was sitting alone, fortunately, when she received it. Hardy gave her the two letters that had arrived for

her by the evening post : one from Cleveland, one from Milner.

She was left alone, with both of them lying on the table before her. To her own amazement, her wild joy was hushed into silence ; for one instant Cleveland seemed to stand before her, the offer of life and death were before her ; she put her hands over her eyes, and yet she did not feel the tears of penitence rush over her face. “ My heart is harder than a stone,” she thought ; “ but I *will* go through with it.” She put away Cleveland’s letter—she could not read it then, but she did not dare destroy it ; she could no more, she felt, have burned that sheet filled by his hand, than she would have dared to turn away from his presence.

To escape, to be free before he knew of her intention, was the object of her greatest desire. She at last tore open Milner’s letter ; then she was lost in a sense of the most bewitching delight,—he appeared to be already at her side. She had thought so intensely of one image for months and months, that latterly at times the recollection of his face, his features, had become almost clouded ; now the power of realising returned with a force and vividness that overpowered her, and her heart seemed to reel under the sudden sense of unutterable happiness.

Milner’s letter was short, but now full of affection, hope, and thrilling interest in her



he addressed. He wished to know if he might come to claim her promise? if, indeed, she was resolved to abide by the change she had made; if she felt she could happily devote her life to help him in the situation in which he was placed? Could she unite herself with him, to live a secluded life of usefulness and devotion to the cause of God on earth? If so, if indeed he was still so happy as to possess her affection, he would only wait to receive her answer, and then immediately hasten to see her once more, to tell her how miserable had been the year of uncertainty he had spent in lonely sorrow.

Helen Mortimer answered his letter directly; in few words she pledged herself to him and the duty he had asked her if she was willing to undertake. She professed herself a Protestant; she said she would become his wife, with every intention of leading a useful, devout, and active life. She told him he might come, and that she was prepared to leave her present home for his sake.

It was at the house of Mr. Trevelyan they met. She was sitting alone in a small morning-room, where Frances had left her, when Milner arrived.

She heard his voice, his step on the stair. So long worn out with the struggles of her wretchedness, she had become so weak, so nervous, that when at last the door opened,

and indeed he stood before her, she gave the faint cry of trembling joy, and burst into tears. Milner quickly approached her, he kissed her on the brow, and sat down at her side.

She fearfully looked up in his face; her eyes ran quickly over the features so impressed on her heart, as if she feared almost to find them changed. Changed they were, for he looked ill; but the expression that shed over them the beauty they possessed was still the same, and the voice that had won her ear more than a year and a half before, was as peculiar in its fascination as then.

Their marriage was fixed for the 25th of May; it was the first of the month the day Milner arrived in London. Miss Mortimer was to go to Windsor, to the home she had first had in England as a child. From the house of Mrs. Trafford she was to be married; they were to go to Ellesmere immediately after making all these arrangements. Milner said he must write to Mr. Cleveland.

“Oh, heaven!” cried Miss Mortimer. Milner took her hand in his, and said, “I can feel for him; I have (he will think) destroyed the work of years. Not so; I have **never** biassed you, dearest Helen. I know from your silence on the subject, which I respect, how much you feel the wound you

inflict on the affectionate regard of your kind friend Mr. Cleveland. I am glad you have not thought it necessary to convince me and yourself of the reality of your change by speaking slightly of the faith you have forsaken for a better. The faith of Cleveland has sprung from the same sacred root as our own. We have come out from its corruptions, but still must respect while we have so much in common."

She took hold of his hand and pressed it to her lips. "My own Cecil!" she whispered, and her eyes filled with tears at the tolerant gentleness with which he spoke of Cleveland.

The following day Milner wrote to Cleveland; the letter announced his intended marriage to Miss Mortimer, the day and the spot where the ceremony was to take place were both mentioned; and Milner concluded with hoping Mr. Cleveland would still continue to be the kind friend he had hitherto been to Miss Mortimer. More than this Milner thought it would be unnecessary to say; it would be absurd to enlarge on the subject of her conversion when writing to Cleveland, whose ardent attachment to his Church amounted to intolerance.

This letter was directed to Paris. It left London on the 6th of May; when it reached Paris, Cleveland had been obliged to go to some towns in the provinces. Not being sure of the time he might be at each, he thought

it safest to have all his letters left in Paris to await his arrival. He was to have returned to Paris on the 14th; he was delayed, and did not reach it till the 20th.

Late in the evening he arrived. He looked over his letters, saw none bearing the hand of Miss Mortimer, who in general wrote from his mother's dictation.

There was one from London, he did not know the writing; one from his mother herself. He opened the former first—it was Milner's.

Cleveland read the first three or four lines,—he understood it all, in an instant he saw it all; he crushed the letter in his hands with the sudden impulse of agonised despair. The blow he dreaded had fallen; he felt as if he could have willingly have sacrificed his life if thus the news contained in that letter could have been proved untrue. Then there arose a flash of anger and indignation.

“She has deceived me cruelly—basely have I been deceived! but—” and a feeling of almost vindictive triumph swept over his heart—“she has not dared to write—to address me. She fears me—at least, will refuse to see me; but she shall—she *shall!*”

Once more he tried to read Milner's letter. He unfolded the crushed and compressed sheet; he could not read it; he pressed his hands over his burning eyes, and

for the first time in a long life the tears of a maddening agony rushed from them.

The next day — the evening of the next day — he left Paris ; he travelled as fast as he could, and reached Calais on the 22d. He embarked late. The twilight of the early spring evening was closing over the shores of France as the vessel swept out of the harbour, and set forth on her way across the troubled grey waters of the Channel.

There is no scene, no hour, that speaks to the thoughtful heart with so melancholy a charm as the dreamy time of twilight, falling in mystery over the chill dim waters of the "wide wild sea." Preoccupied with his own misery, Cleveland still felt the indescribable solemnity and peculiar beauty of the scene around him. There was a fresh north-westerly breeze ; a few clouds were careering swiftly over the skies ; at that hour only, illuminated by the stars, Cleveland walked the deck alone, speaking to no one. They had left Calais at half-past nine ; the vessel was a small — rather slow — packet ; and their voyage lasted longer than usual. The first grey streak of dawn was breaking over the pale outline of the English cliffs as Cleveland landed at Dover.

He reached London the evening of that day, and went first to his mother's house. He was aware that she knew of Miss Mortimer's intended marriage, for in the letter

he had received from Mrs. Cleveland before leaving Paris, that lady had expressed herself shortly, but strongly, on that most "disgusting case of unlawful seduction."

Cleveland entered the house: Hardy spoke to him, hoped he was well, and looked almost wistfully in his face; he was attached to Cleveland, who, from a boy, had been peculiar for his gentle and attaching manners to all those around him. Cleveland hardly replied, and hurried up stairs. The old servant went down to inform Mrs. Phillips his master looked "awfully vexed."

Mrs. Cleveland was engaged in unusually earnest conversation with her Irish friend when her son arrived.

"Well!" was all she said, as she looked anxiously in his face.

"Perhaps you did not expect to see me at present," said Cleveland; "but I thought it better — right — to come. I am going to Windsor early to-morrow."

"Not to see *her*, surely!" cried his mother. "What can you hope to do in such a case? Now, how very foolish you are! What is the use of vexing ourselves about a silly, unprincipled girl? The girl who *could* act in such a way is not worth looking after, or bringing back. Never mind — you see *I* don't fret myself. I can tell you, I will not — no, I never will — forgive her. She shall

never live here again, not if she should go down upon her knees to ask our pardon——”

Cleveland silenced her with a look.

“Tell me,” he said, “tell me when she left this. Did she go to Windsor?—did she speak to you?—did she not leave a word—any thing—a line for me?”

“Oh! I’ll tell you,” said his mother. “I was sitting in here, I had begun to be I did not know what quite—I was sitting here one evening, just before lights came—I was alone—in came she—she came up close to me. She did not sit down, I think. No, she stood just there by my chair; in her hand she held a small packet. She said just so: ‘Mrs. Cleveland, I am come to take leave of you; I leave this house to-morrow. I go to Windsor. I have to request you will give this to Mr. Cleveland when—if he comes—to—England soon. I will write to you from Windsor.’ She burst into tears, hurried from the room, and went to her own. I was so astonished, I could not speak; the only message she would send down was (I could not go up and down myself, you know),—‘She shall hear soon from me.’ And so next day, early, the Trevelyans called for her; and quite early, before I was out of my room, she was off. Next day, Miss Trevelyan came here; she brought me this letter from her.”

As Mrs. Cleveland spoke, she took from her pocket a crumpled sheet; Cleveland seized it, and, with it in his hand, he left the room.

He went to his own study—the room that had been called so; the shutters were only half open, for he was not expected there, and the whole apartment wore an air of long neglect. He found on the table a packet addressed to him, in the hand of Miss Mortimer. He took it up, and looked for many minutes in silence at the seals that clasped the folds; the device was of one that he had given her two years before—the dove with the olive-leaf, “*Je reviendrai :*” she had chosen it herself. At last he opened the sheets that enclosed her Book of Prayer and her mother’s crucifix. A few lines, hurriedly written, dropped out from between the two, where she had placed them. Cleveland read the words of farewell she left for him—they were only these :—

“ I have not written to you before ; I cannot leave this house without one word—one line—to say how humbly I implore your pardon for the pain I fear my change—my marriage—will cause you. No words can ever express my gratitude to you for the many happy months and years I have spent with you. For I *was* happy indeed, indeed I was; but my fate has changed, and my faith likewise. Forgive me—forgive me, at



least. Do not try to see me, for it will be quite useless."

Her initials and the date were all she added.

Cleveland read this, and long after his brain had taken in the meaning, he continued to look at the writing before him, like one in a dream. He roused himself at last, and put aside the book and crucifix; the letter he kept crushed in his hand, till, with an effort, he suddenly tore it into pieces and flung it beneath the grate, and immediately he went up stairs again. He found his mother very anxious to inform him Miss Trevelyan had come, as she said, with Miss Mortimer's letter, and she had taken the opportunity to say the most cutting and severe things of the Protestant faith in general, and of the Misses Trevelyan in particular.

## CHAPTER XII.

IMMEDIATELY after sending his letter to Cleveland, Milner announced his marriage to his friends generally. It caused some astonishment.

One elderly maiden connexion hoped "it might be for his good," but doubted the probability of a *ci-devant* Roman Catholic making a good wife. Another frankly owned she did not credit sudden conversions, especially when Love had been of the aiders and abettors of the change. Some shook their heads, some "hoped it was for the best," but all wished him joy.

To all who ventured to let these remarks reach his ears, Milner returned a brief but courteous answer. As a Catholic, Miss Mortimer had, he knew, served and feared God, and devoted herself to a charitable and actively useful life. As a Protestant, he doubted not the continuance of her earnest zeal; and engaged as they were thus, he did not think it necessary to satisfy the world by insisting

on a long probation of the faith of the woman he loved, and had chosen for his wife.

Milner had no very near relatives ; father and mother he had lost. He had been an only child, and so it was, indeed, to him a great object to have a partner, a companion, a helpmate in every sense of the word, to lighten his labours, to enliven his solitude, and be the "angel of his days;" all this he imagined he had found united in her, the first and only love of his heart and soul. Every feeling he had, found in her its gratification. The ideal of grace, interest, purity, and loveliness, so long unseen, had at last come forth to meet him ; and recognising in her the more sterling qualities of truthful earnestness, unworldliness, and elevated feeling, he felt, indeed, he had met "an angel by the way," and as such, he gave up into her willing hands every thought and affection of this world ; and, more than that, he thought that, united now in one faith, together they might tread one path heavenward.

Their marriage was fixed for the 25th of May. On many accounts they wished the time of their union hastened ; it would put an end to all discussions, and enable them to establish themselves in peace and happiness at Ellesmere.

The day before Miss Mortimer went to Windsor was a Sunday. In the morning Milner came to join them at church. It

was the first time they had attended Divine service together since the Christmas time at Cotesbrooke. With the Trevelyans Miss Mortimer went to church. Milner was at her side. How many were the mingled thoughts of rapture, joy, and trembling anguish which swept over her brain during that time of worship! Milner—Cleveland—the present—the past—the future! She closed her eyes to still the wild progress, if possible, of her unchained feelings; for a long silence, a long rest from action, was to her intolerable misery. When Milner was present, every sense and thought was engrossed. He did not observe the languor, the depression, and sometimes the excitement of her looks and manner. If by chance he did so, he forbore to notice it, thinking it was easily accounted for by the struggle of habit and conviction she had lately gone through. He respected her silence on the subject, and would not himself have broken one he held so sacred.

When the Trevelyans returned home between the services, they begged Miss Mortimer to accompany them; she consented, and so did Milner.

When the party went to the dining-room to lunch, Milner detained Helen an instant.

“Stay one moment: I have something I want to have the pleasure of putting on my-

self, in the place it should occupy." And he took out a small ring-case, containing a ring—made in the shape of a serpent—of plain gold: one large diamond was placed in the head. He put it on her finger.

"This will be what they call 'a guard.' The serpent thus wreathed into a circle, dear Helen, has lost his mischievous propensities, and is the emblem of eternity. Everlasting is *our* love to be, my dearest. So I place my ring where it will be for many, many long years, I hope. The diamond belonged to my mother. She left it to me. Now it is yours."

It was the only gift in the shape of ornaments that Milner gave his bride. Many of his friends sent presents for the vicarage. Aunts, cousins, and connexions sent divers useful and ornamental offerings for Milner and his future wife.

Mrs. Trevelyan gave a pretty China dinner service. Mr. Trevelyan presented them with a breakfast set of the same. "A beautiful match, like the owners," said one of the younger Trevelyans who, had shewn symptoms of early punning.

Annie and Minnie Trevelyan, after sending half the shopkeepers in London into a state of distraction at the universal *bouleversement* of their respective warehouses, were, at last, induced to unite their purses, and expend their money, and express their

love, by the purchase of a handsome desk for Helen's writing-table.

Frances said she reserved her gift until the wedding-day, that she might be sure of an invitation.

How much of sympathy and kindness do those three great events,—a birth, a marriage, and a death call forth! Thank Heaven there are still events where, like resting-places apart from the weary high-road, we gladly turn aside, and shaking the dust from our feet, we tarry for awhile, to rejoice, to sympathise, to comfort, to commune with our fellow-travellers; putting from us, for a time, the worldly selfishness that, to a degree, hardens and encrusts on the warmest heart.

The very interest, so often smiled at, which surrounds the newly-dead and the newly married, is a proof how readily the feelings of the multitude do answer to the call for sympathy in the joy and grief of a fellow-creature. Evanescent, truly, may be the feelings; but it shews they are at least not paralysed altogether.

On that Sunday afternoon, Frances Trevelyan and her mother, accompanied by Helen and Milner, went to Westminster Abbey.

Miss Mortimer had never attended the service there; for the first time she entered the holy precincts, as her heart instantly owned them to be.

It was a bright day without, and the sudden change of the entrance into a chill, dim atmosphere, struck heavily on the spirit of Helen.

The vibration of the organ's tones, fluttering in the air like a mighty spirit seeking to free itself and rise above the soft echoes of the chanted Amen—the white-robed choristers—the stained glass windows,—the whole scene before her recalled the memory of her own Church—of Cleveland; and his name, even only pronounced mentally, sent over her soul a darkening dread like coming judgment, which she in vain tried to argue against. The very skies and sun for her seemed to change their brightness when she thought of seeing him again. “But I never shall, I never will!” she repeated often to herself at such times. She looked at Cecil at the moment she had thought of Cleveland. His eyes were bent on his book. How calm, how manly, how simple his devotion! Yet she felt Milner was no more than a fellow-worshipper. Cleveland had stood on the pedestal, raised by the Church above the rest of the world. To him she could look up as one to shield her soul from some share of its responsibility; for Milner, much as she adored, much as she loved him as one of the excellent of the earth, she felt as one who did not imagine him invested with any of

the mysterious power she believed Cleveland to hold over her.

At this instant she felt her soul, so to speak, turned adrift. Cleveland and his Church she had wilfully left. Milner did not offer the immediate positive aid and shelter she expected. She did not dare utter a prayer. She remained with her hands clasped, her heart full of a momentary desperation. She looked up in Milner's face—he was sitting opposite to her—and those calm, loving eyes fell upon hers, with the steadfast security of an affection untroubled by remorse and doubt.

Her heart was smitten by the peaceful, gentle confidence of his expression.—“Ah, Heaven! Cecil—my Cecil—I am treacherous to you—to all—to myself most, I believe.”

Milner, when the service was ended, asked if she was tired.

“Oh, no, no!” she replied, and she took his arm, and they walked home—home through the sunny Parks, filling then with gay crowds of high and low. In the course of their return they passed by the line of carriages and horses moving in different directions.

“How gay it looks!” said Frances. “Pity it is not a day of rest for beast, as well as pleasure for man!”



"It can't be avoided," said Mrs. Trevelyan.

"Can't!" said Frances. "That is a word the Bible, I think, very seldom makes use of. That is an excuse for ourselves."

"Oh, Frances, you are always so downright!" said her mother. "All these people have been to church once, and twice even. Draw the reins too tight and you will lose all. Isn't that true, Mr. Milner?"

"That is an argument I do not use," replied Milner. "The reins, as you say, are literally between each man and heaven. That theory of allowing people to be harmlessly merry, in order that they may be well enough amused to leave wickedness alone, is to me a very vain idea."

"But it is better to be harmlessly happy than noisy and ill-behaved, surely?" said Mrs. Trevelyan, who had strong views of outward discipline.

"I am not sure," said Milner, "when 'harmlessly happy' means buying, selling, and over-loading all the unhappy horses in town or country."

"Witness France and its Sunday dances," said Miss Trevelyan. "The argument there is, I believe, that it is wise to let people dance, in order that they may not drink. Mass once a-day satisfies the claims of religion, fortunately. So many

are kept within a wide, lax boundary, apparently."

"That is," said Milner, "one of the wise devices of Continental religion. Offer a small sacrifice of prayer and obedience, and you may stand within the limits of the Church, saved, bought, and blessed. With us it cannot be so."

"Why?" in a low voice, said Miss Mortimer.

"Because each man to his Master must stand or fall," replied Milner. "Our Church strives not to bring men to herself, but their souls to God. She would not value the power of a wide temporal dominion, a perfect outward unity. The Church of Rome ——"

Miss Mortimer felt the words pierce her with a sudden pang. It was the first time Milner had addressed the words to her.

"The Church of Rome will compass earth and sea for as many proselytes as she can stretch the limits of her laxity to receive. 'Come to me and be saved,' is her language: no doubt the most acceptable invitation any faith can offer: but she promises more than she can perform, and, like most deceivers, weaves a tangled web indeed."

Miss Mortimer felt her heart sink with dread. She looked on Milner with an eye of awe and fear. Had he discovered her

weakness? She covered her fright by saying simply,—

“How?”

“How?” said Milner. “By promising safety, she must put herself in the place of a Saviour. Once there, she must grasp the attributes of Divinity—Infallibility firmest. Then the Church, the body of Christians, are divided into the fallible and infallible; the latter bear the responsibilities of the former for the sake of their temporal allegiance, not for their spiritual welfare.”

The thought of Cleveland—holy, excelling in goodness and anxiety for the well-being of others, came over Miss Mortimer. She answered with all the indifference she could assume,—

“There are exceptions.”

“Certainly there are,” said Milner. “The Roman Church has virtue in herself still, light to shed on the way; and there are most noble, singular examples, of surpassing sanctity within her boundaries. She can raise herself to meet the aspiring energies of the most holy and devoted; she can lower herself to the meanest offices of hypocrisy and double dealing. The truth alone is not in her. The heaven of lies, covered and overpowered sometimes by the excellence of peculiar cases, still shews itself when it meets with unworthy professors and ministers of her grace. Crime there is, I deny not,

amongst ourselves; but it is the sin of an individual, not the combination of that individual with the doctrines he has the power of teaching and inculcating. The worship of Saints, in the hands of one a harmless remembrance of the Blessed who have gone before, becomes in the hands of another a pure idolatry. The possibility of such changes becomes not the faith that descends from 'the Father of light, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning.'"

They reached home at that instant. Next morning Miss Mortimer went to Windsor, and Milner left London for Ellesmere. He had to go thither, and, besides attending to his duty, to arrange the house for the reception of his bride.

Mrs. Trafford was delighted to see Miss Mortimer. She had been much pleased to hear she had become a Protestant. She told some of her friends she considered it principally owing to the excellent religious education she had given her niece; and she was, moreover, extremely well pleased to have the bustle and importance of a marriage to ennoble her small household in the eyes of the neighbourhood.

Miss Mortimer was glad to enjoy the quiet of the country, away from the noise and excitement even of the 'Trevelyans' house; and yet she felt, she knew not why, a fear of solitude — a dread of her

own thoughts she had never felt before. Now that Milner had returned to Ellesmere, the whole of the events of the last few weeks appeared like the wild scenes of an improbable drama. Yet how inexpressibly happy was the conviction of the reality of her position! Every hour she had spent in Milner's presence had endeared him to her. She felt terrified at the depth and strength of the affection she felt for one who was indeed most worthy of it, for in proportion as she loved she felt the extent of her capacity of suffering. It must be always so in this world, where the joy of possessing is instantaneously followed by the dread of losing.

There was one thought that shook her soul with vehement fears,—the idea of seeing Cleveland. His personal influence, she mournfully confessed to herself, was as strong as ever. She had not been granted the power to dethrone one who had so long ruled sole master of her spirit and her conscience. He had been, she allowed with trembling and tears, dispossessed by the sudden usurpation of an earthly passion. He stood before her mind in all the strength of constancy of purpose; invested with a sacred authority Milner did not assume even—clad in the brightness of sanctity, holiness, saint-like love, and charity, Cleveland was in her thoughts and convictions as an emblem of divine wisdom and human perfection: to

this was added the haunting memory of his kindness, his affection, his care, his unceasing anxiety to make her good and happy. Thus she would muse away the hours of Milner's absence, divided between the passionate present love, the mournful past, and the dreaded future ; she was lost in a maze of hopes, fears, and presentiments. She was true, perfectly true, to none : ungrateful, treacherous to Cleveland, she was going to act a worse part to Milner.

Meanwhile, the day of her marriage drew near,—it was fixed for the 25th. On the 24th all her new bride's clothes, &c. &c. had arrived safely. Milner was to reach London that evening from the country, and come to Windsor with the Trevelyans by eleven o'clock on the morning of Thursday the 25th. A few friends were to assemble to witness the ceremony. Her friend, Frances Trevelyan, and one of her sisters, were to be her bridesmaids.

On Wednesday afternoon she expected from London the young person she had engaged as a maid. Wilson, not having seen her future mistress before, would naturally be anxious for an interview with her ; and so, when Miss Mortimer was about to go out for a short walk, she left a message, that when the girl came a message should be sent to her : they would find her at the old beech-trees—this was a well-known spot

in Mrs. Trafford's household,—and then Miss Mortimer went out to the Forest.

She had not been gone a quarter of an hour when Cleveland arrived at Elmswood. He found Miss Mortimer was out; but if he wished she could be sent for.

“I will go and meet her: can any one direct me?”

The servant immediately led him part of the way, and, after giving him an idea of the road to the old beech-trees, left him; and Cleveland walked quickly on through the still green walks in search of Miss Mortimer.

She had sauntered slowly through the wood. In her hand she held Milner's last letter; the last she should receive from him as a lover. To-morrow, at that hour, he would be her husband. She wandered on, enjoying the full luxury of an idle and most enchanting day-dream: all fears of meeting Cleveland were over. She had cast for that day the awful images of dread and remorse behind her: she had opened her heart to the perfect enjoyment of the day and the hour, and both were lovely and bright. She stood on the threshold of her married life; Love, clothed in the garb of holiness and goodness, opened for her the gates of an enchanted palace. She was loved by Milner as none can love but the pure and unstained by selfish sins. She obtained the long-coveted gift of his affec-

tion—they were now every thing on the earth to each other—a happy home awaited them. Every hour of the sunshiny spring day that passed brought them nearer and nearer now to an eternal union. She looked round her as she seated herself beneath the shade of the spreading trees; the air was full of the breath of the coming summer—the birds were singing loud and clear in the branches above. On that day, indeed,

“Hope, enchanted, waved her golden hair.”

“Oh, I do not deserve to be so very, very happy!” these words she almost said aloud in the fulness of her heart. She pressed the signature, “your faithful Cecil,” to her lips; and as she raised her eyes glittering with tears, she beheld Cleveland walking swiftly towards her.

She felt incapable of moving or speaking till he was quite close to her. He came, and he held out his hand; she put hers into his chill palm—the feeling of it made her shiver.

“I am come,” said Cleveland; and when he began to speak she raised her eyes to his face: he was deadly pale; his eyes looked larger and of deeper power than she had thought them before. He spoke in the same low, mournful tones, she remembered when he wished her farewell, and begged her to remain firm and faithful to her promises.



"I am come to see if, at this eleventh hour, you are indeed lost to a sense of duty to your own safety. Your wish not to be met only made me the more anxious to come. It shewed me you are still open to conviction—to the fear of God—to the dread of eternal loss. Helen, I implore you by every thing sacred—by the faith we have held together so long—by the memory of your mother—by all you hold most holy—I conjure, I implore you to return to the faith you have been shamefully seduced from."

"It was my own will," faltered Miss Mortimer. "It is my own pleasure still. It is too late. Leave me, Mr. Cleveland."

"It is never too late!" he cried, with a voice of trembling, eager hope; "never, never too late! Speak one word—one word—I will save you without interference on your part. Return to my mother's house: I will so arrange every thing that not one word shall you hear to annoy you. Return—only return." He clasped his hands with a gesture of entreaty.

"I will not—I cannot. I could not if I would—I would not if I could," cried Miss Mortimer, rising from the ground where she was seated in wild agitation. "To Milner my faith is pledged."

"Valuable, indeed, that faith you have broken with Heaven!" said Cleveland. It was the first taunting, disrespectful word he

had ever used in speaking to her; and Miss Mortimer felt it cut her to her heart's core.

"Yes, Mr. Cleveland; insult me if you will," she said, "I have deserved every thing from you; but now we must part: you must leave me—why do you stay?"

He seized her hand in his trembling grasp, and gasped out.

"Stay? why stay? Trusting in God for power to restore you to your senses. I would sacrifice my life, every thing but my salvation, to make you recall the fatal decisions of the last few weeks. Laugh at my despair if you will!"—and he cast upon her a glance that held the withering brightness of lightning,—“I tell you—I tell you, you are not changed in mind; you believe as strongly as ever the creed I impressed with many prayers on your soul: my work is not annihilated by the vain, wild gust of a short-lived passion, the love of a young and heated imagination you have bestowed on an idol Chance threw in your way. Your higher and holier nature I have raised, purified, reclaimed from the dross and dust that clung to it. In you I saw the promise of one of the brightest and most useful of those whose good works and pure lives are a crown of glory laid at the feet of their guide through the wilderness,—that Guide the Church we both once served.”

"I know too well, Mr. Cleveland, what I owe you ; you have my everlasting gratitude," said Miss Mortimer.

"Not to boast of my efforts do I so speak," said Cleveland mournfully. "Indeed, indeed, I mention them to arouse you from the fatal spells an unsanctified love has flung over you. You would be, as far as your own feelings are concerned, in a happier case, were you indeed at heart the faithless woman you profess to be. But it is not so ; you have cast aside, wilfully, the chain with which God in His great love had bound you to His service. You set yourself free, unswayed by one honest conviction ; and you go to another altar, address the same Almighty Father, and you think He will not—in His great mercy I hope he will—speak to you in a voice of thunder that shall shiver to atoms the false idol to whom you have offered the worship due only to 'your God.'"

Miss Mortimer held up her hands, as if imploring his mercy ; but he continued to speak. She tried to move ; he caught her firmly by the hand, and bending on her his eyes, he spoke with a calm force that fell in characters of fire on her brain. She listened as to a tempest, from which it was vain to look for shelter.

"Here I have come—to find—to save—at least to warn you. The one you love to your own everlasting loss is, I believe,

amiable, gentle, of pure life, of good intentions. On him I pass not judgment when I speak to you. But to you, uniting with him is a deadly sin. What does it entail on you?—a life separate from the ordinances of God, the rejection of the mercies, the privileges you held once. You trample under foot all you once held sacred: worse far worse—that, I defy you to deny!—you still hold sacred. You wander away from the path marked out for you into a weary wilderness, with none to guide, to uphold, to enlighten, beyond the miserable observances of the duties and charities of life. The religion of which your future husband is a minister, professes not, does not dare assume the power of binding and loosing to all eternity: the very affectation of humility proves her weakness. She cannot stand on the immutable Rock of Ages, and call aloud on a perishing world, ‘Come to me and be ye saved.’ Helen, once more I implore you to return to safety, happiness, and heaven. Oh, God! when I think of you thus setting forth gay and careless on the road of eternal death, my heart recoils from the misery I see before you. Now is the moment to stop—now is the only day of salvation.”

Miss Mortimer made a few efforts to speak, but vainly; Cleveland continued with a rapid force to address her.

“There is no alternative—none—none;

were you to be allowed to retain your faith—to remain a member of the Church—to serve God as you have done for the last few years. But you are bound by the same professions as your future husband has made. Had he even allowed you to keep the faith he despises and rejects himself—had he married you on these terms, even then——”

“Would you, yourself, have acted thus?” said Miss Mortimer, reproachfully. “It would have been equally unworthy of him.” She took her hand from his clasp. “Leave me, Mr. Cleveland; my mind is made up.” She left him; he followed her steps.

“Listen, listen to me yet once more,” he said. “You know not what you are doing; you stand now on the brink of a joyful future—health, happiness, and ease, lull your soul to its false rest. But mark me, there are yet other scenes awaiting you—sickness, the fear of death, the dread of eternity: then you will recall my words; then, in the day of wrath, will you implore the mercies you slight so easily now. In life you may forget, in death you cannot. When cast down into the depths, then remember me; remember my words; my warnings, above all, remember. Penitence brings pardon; confession, full remission. You have only to recall me—I will come, I will come—I would come from the ends of the

earth at your cry for help and aid. The ears of the Lord are ever open to those who seek Him through the appointed way; that way I had shewn you: I led you to the gates and you would not enter in. Still, while you live I shall have hope; day and night my prayers will ascend to heaven in your behalf—as they have for years past.”

His voice failed, and his silence spoke more eloquently than words, from its touching cause. The mute grief of Cleveland shook the heart of Miss Mortimer in a way no argument could do at the moment; she looked at him, and respectfully took his hand in both hers: her tears fell on it as she implored his pardon and entreated his forgiveness as a friend, whatever he might feel it his duty to express otherwise.

“Friend!” cried Cleveland. He said no more, but his mind glanced over the last few years, and he saw all the warmer interests of his life—all his domestic affections, dormant so long—all the sympathies never called forth during the chill years of his seclusion—all that he had known of brightness, happiness, and innocent enjoyment, concentrated in the one who now forsook him, the home she had illuminated with her presence, and the faith he imagined he had impressed to all eternity upon her soul.

He dared stay no longer; he dashed the tears away; he did not care for the evidence

they thus gave that his heart mourned this eternal separation. He turned away.

"Shall I *never* see you again, Mr. Cleveland?" said Miss Mortimer, almost unconsciously to herself. The idea that they had parted thus for ever, was to her at the moment inexpressibly awful.

"Never? yes, I trust in Heaven we may yet meet. I still look upon you as one erring, but not lost. I believe we shall meet again—it may be not for years; but when once the mists of a wild passion have rolled from your eyes, you will recall this hour with bitterness; and then, not till then, we shall meet again."

He left her, and walked quickly back to Elmswood, passed only through the grounds, and without speaking to Mrs. Trafford he returned to London.

In the course of a few days he went to France again. He was to stay there some months. A gloom of the deepest shade settled over the mind of Cleveland. His feelings had been tried in a way they had never been before; the affections he had imagined so chilled by time and religious habits had been rudely hurt: still he would work out his purpose—sacrifice his daily life—and higher and higher would he rise in the sphere to which he belonged.

When he left England for Calais again, on the 27th of the month, he gazed long

at the white and lessening cliffs of his native land. Beyond that cloud-like shore lay the happy home of Milner and Helen, far in the green valleys of Devonshire; and he was bound for a foreign land, with a future, selfishly speaking, as vague and colourless as the grey skies and water that limited the horizon before him. A bitter sense of the difference overcame him for a moment. Then he murmured to himself,—“ ‘ This is not our rest ;’ thank God I have never made it so.”

Still his thoughts flew back and back, again and again, to the centre round which they had once so fondly clung. It appeared now to be years almost since he had last seen her. His heart followed her steps, his memory still wildly wandered over the past—the past, like a “pleasant land left far behind in the sunshine.” “Oh! why can I not forget?” said Cleveland to his busy fancy. He trembled to find his regrets were mixed with a selfish sorrow. He struggled to turn his sorrow into a just anger, and then came a complacent sense of the power he still held, and a longing desire that for her the hour of conviction might arrive, of triumph and victory for him.



## CHAPTER XIII.

ON the 25th, by eleven o'clock, a small party assembled at Mrs. Trafford's, to witness the marriage of Mr. Milner and Miss Mortimer.

The Trevelyans had arrived at an early hour from London. Frances remained alone with her friend, after the more noisy members of the family had come into the room to offer their congratulations.

It was a lovely warm May-day. The window was flung wide open; through the casement came the fresh breeze of early morning, with the scent of the honeysuckle, the hum and song of bird and bee; and below in the sunshine, walking about the small bright garden, were some gaily-dressed figures of the guests, who had arrived to breakfast from a distance—a real breakfast before the marriage, which is a very different thing from that dissipation, a *déjeûner*, afterwards.

“See!” said Frances, “what a glorious day! You know the saying, ‘Happy is the

bride the sun shines on.' Remember, I am to have the pleasure of dressing you to-day." And she fulfilled her intention by binding the wreath and veil on the head of the young bride. "Now," she said, "take your farewell of vanities; go to the glass and see how well you look." They stood before the small mirror, and it reflected a fair and innocent face, with a form of much natural grace. "Now, this is my gift and finishing touch; I will venture to say you will like my present best, after all," and she clasped a gold bracelet on Helen's arm. On touching a spring, a plate gemmed with turquoise flew up, and shewed a small miniature of Cecil Milner. It was a beautiful likeness, and had the expression of the original well defined.

"Ah! how like—how very, very like!" cried Helen. "This is, indeed, what must stand next to himself in my heart."

At this moment a noisy detachment from down stairs, headed by Annie Trevelyan, came to the door. Not long after the bride came down. The small circle was hushed into silence, and the service, read by a friend of Milner, began.

• Mr. Trevelyan gave the bride away. There was no male relation to go through the form. The thought of the absent Cleveland passed like a shadow over the heart of Helen, but she put it aside.

She pledged her faith to Milner; with all her soul did she vow to love and honour him. Alas! she felt there lay no difficulty for her. Milner promised in turn eternal love to the only one on whom he had ever dreamed of conferring such a gift, and so they were married. It was a union on which heaven and earth seemed to smile that day. It was one unstained by worldliness, or any less worthy motive than the affection that had bound them together the first day they met. Few and far, far between, are instances of a like kind. But here and there they are scattered, rare flowers in a wide wilderness; sudden starlight in a wintry and clouded sky, sent to recall the memory of a lost Paradise; echoes from a "dear land of lost delight:" no wonder in the hearing of the multitude they are as unmeaning as the fragments of a long-forgotten melody!

As soon as the prayers were concluded, the company congratulated Mr. and Mrs. Milner. Mrs. Trafford hurried up, dressed in grey silk and a cap unnaturally gay for her years. "Bless you, my dear child!" She was succeeded by the Trevelyans; and Mrs. Benson, in a bonnet fitted up with feathers for the occasion, put in her claims as an old friend to have a near view and a kind word from the bride.

Half an hour after Milner and his wife drove away from the door; they were to go

home straight, and expected to reach Ellesmere on Saturday night.

The party at Windsor soon separated when they were gone. The marriage afforded some topics for tea-table-talk for the following two months at least; and Mrs. Trafford had the satisfaction of seeing Elmswood, Windsor, made honourable mention of in the London papers, as the place where the wedding of her niece and Cecil Milner had been celebrated. Childhood and old age meet sometimes in the harmlessness of their interests. It is the years between the two in which Selfishness frequently shews itself in its most disgusting shape. "To live again in one's children," as it is elegantly expressed, sounds much better than living to one's self, which is the same meaning in plainer language. Mrs. Trafford was a specimen of that frequent spectacle, a harmless, foolish, rather selfish old lady. It has been too truly pointed out, that great intellectual dulness is not unfrequently accompanied by a deficiency of moral excellence. In most, in many cases at least, it may be the result of concealing the single talent in a napkin, and thus losing the small opportunity vouchsafed at first.

Milner and his wife reached Ellesmere on Saturday evening, at seven o'clock. It was about the hour of sunset when they reached their lovely and quiet home. He led her

into the room where so many months before she had sat alone that Christmas she spent at Cotesbrooke; but now the summer was there, and the windows were opened; round them clung the woodbine, and above was twined the climbing rose and jessamine. They went into the garden, and they passed together through the walks she remembered so well in wintry weather; now the flowers of spring and buds of summer were around them. Together they sat down on the low moss-grown seat beneath a large ilex-tree, and there side by side they sat for many minutes, wrapped in the enjoyment of the delicious silence of the first hour of approaching night.

After a long and rather rapid journey they felt the full luxury of the dreamy quiet, the ecstasy of the enchanting loneliness of Ellesmere. It was a type of their fate for the last few months. They had reached the haven where they would be; there, safe and happy, they had found the peaceful end of their troubles.

Days passed on, and all Helen Milner's thoughts and feelings were lost in the overwhelming sense of most matchless happiness. If she thought of Cleveland, it was by fits and starts — as of an apparition she had half forgotten to believe in. And Milner, ever watchful, ever tender, as on the first day of their marriage, was happy — as

happy as he had ever imagined it possible for him to be.

Both entered on a life of unceasing activity. The surrounding village and neighbourhood consisted principally of the peasantry and tenantry of Lord Arrandale; there were few resident gentry; and it was only when the family were at the castle of the viscount just mentioned that there was any thing in the shape of decidedly gay doings.

Thus Milner and his young wife were left much to themselves. The Talbots had left Cotesbrooke for a year's tour on the Continent. And, indeed, they did not wish for any society beyond their own home. Supremely happy in each other, they felt not the want of others to help on the flight of time.

Once only did Mrs. Milner hear any thing of Cleveland. A month after her marriage she received an intimation he had ordered a few valuable books he had left in London to be sent to her. They arrived, and proved to be those (unconnected with religion) she had most frequently read and praised when living with Mrs. Cleveland. His name was written in some; they were sent just as he had left them. He had once told her he would give them to her when they parted for a long time. Helen unpacked them, alone, one evening; it was

late. Milner had gone on a round of distant visits, and had not yet returned home. Helen shook the dust from the binding, and opened the leaves —

“ HENRY CLEVELAND,  
1809.”

The faded ink told it was twenty years ago, nearly, since the letters had been there inscribed. She took one volume, and looked long at the name so loved, so dreaded, still so revered. What a spell did the very appellation of Cleveland still throw over her! There was, besides, a melancholy charm in possessing any thing he had given her; she looked on the gift as a legacy. She imagined he meant it as a proof he did not believe they would meet again. Often, often had she repassed in her thoughts every syllable of their last interview. She was glad, indeed, to remember she had not said one unkind or angry word to the friend from whom she was now parted for ever.

For some time, then, Cleveland remained in her memory, shrouded in the mystery and melancholy that his willing exile, his painful parting with her, and his unselfish and holy life threw over him. It was not till several months had elapsed that his image was recalled in the awful character of an avenger, and that his well-remembered words of warning rung in her ears with the tones of thun-

der. It was occasioned by an event of a most touching and solemn nature.

The parishioners of Milner were, in every way, benefited by the change in their pastor's life. Helen was never tired of visiting, helping, attending on the aged or infirm, and instructing the younger part of her husband's charge. She found her greatest comfort in busily engaging in active duties of charity and self-denial. It was a testimony of her being still, she hoped, a servant of God ; further she dared not look. There were moments when a struggle with the demon of doubt cast her down to the earth in despair and anguish. Still Milner served his God in all earnestness and humility ; this was a truth which could not be questioned. But she felt, at such times, how unable he was to allay the tempest of fear, grief, and horror that besieged her soul, had he even been acquainted with the full extent of her misgivings. Then, then, indeed, often in the stillness of night did she, waking from her sleep, rise softly, and, leaving her room, wander into the cooler passages, up and down for a short time, until, with mighty efforts, she regained her composure. This was some months after her marriage, shortly before the event of which I am going to speak. At these hours, who can describe the state of a soul distracted by a sense of unpardoned sins — a spirit racked and shat-



tered by the mystical horror called nervousness—head and heart alike weakened in their energies? Then the words of Scripture speak, indeed, with a supernatural force. Happy those who read in the simple light of the truth from above, unmixed with the false glimmer of human reasoning!

Passages of the word of God continually passed before her mind—invested ever with the meaning they had received from Cleveland's teaching; the Psalms, especially when read by the impressive voice of Milner in church, acquired, above all other portions of the service, the power to awaken repentant agony.

One evening—it was the seventeenth morning of the month—she was listening in a prayerless silence (for despair can rarely raise up its voice for the pardon it expects not to find); her husband read in his calm mild tones, the eighty-seventh Psalm—"Her foundations are upon the holy hills. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob."—The words fell on her ear with a frightful meaning and power attached to them. She felt, indeed, "I am so fast in prison I cannot get forth." She tried to take refuge in her blameless life and charitable acts of kindness: and Milner, that day, had chosen for his text "We are unprofitable servants." He shewed forth, in language equally forcible and sim-

ple, the worthlessness of our own claims on the mercy of God, unassisted by the great Sacrifice once offered for our sins. His words were, in some degree, a comfort to her. She felt how simply Milner set before her the truth — a truth she bowed down to. But then he appeared to her to stop short, and to stop short satisfied. He appeared not placed above one of his humblest and most unlearned listeners: he assumed not the commanding position of Cleveland. The “full assurance” of the power to bind, to loose, to remit sins, to soothe the sinner’s soul, he seemed to feel still remained in the hands of the unseen Spirit of God. He spoke as a teacher of God’s will — not a visible dispenser of His grace. She, longing for immediate comfort, was by him answered by an earnest injunction to look above — to confess all sins, weakness, and faithlessness to the Father of our spirits — to wait patiently for the Lord, “whose ears are ever open to our cry.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

LATE in the autumn, the first after their marriage, Milner told his wife, on coming home from the village, that he had met Lord Arrandale's steward, Johnson. The man had told him the family were expected to spend Christmas and the New Year at the Castle.

"Who was Lady Arrandale? Have you ever seen her, Cecil?"

"I have, once, in London; they seldom, very seldom, come here: they have a much finer place than Arrandale in Yorkshire,—Bletchingham Park. She was Lady Caroline Devereux, Lord Avonmore's daughter: she is very handsome, and lively, and clever, I fancy."

"Indeed! that is a brilliant reputation," said Helen. "Did you admire her much, Cecil?"

"She appeared to me very pretty," he replied.

No woman ever stopped short at such a generality as "very pretty," when applied by

a husband of less than a twelvemonth's standing to an unseen object of admiration.

"Well; but now tell me a little more," said Helen. "Is she dark or fair, agreeable, accomplished? Do you know, I have never in my life spoken to a woman of rank. You will laugh, and not believe me, when I say, that I feel I should be—be afraid at first of doing so. I have, do you know, a most romantic idea attached to the list of names that glitter in the peerage."

"I dare say," said Milner, smiling, as she looked up in his face from the low seat she occupied at his side; "because they have most of them shone first 'in lofty deeds and daring high.' There is a chivalrous corner in every woman's heart at least. The bodily presence of great names is sometimes, perhaps, a dismal extinguisher placed on the fancy; but still, Viscountess Arrandale, I am inclined to think, will fulfil her appellation in your idea."

"I hope so," replied Mrs. Milner, almost unconsciously. Her thoughts had flown back to a conversation of the same kind she had once had with Cleveland. The hereditary pride of his family had in him softened down into the picturesque-chivalrous romance that would have sent him a Crusader to the Holy Land in the days of Saint Louis or Cœur de Lion. The Clevelands of Cleveland had now their sole representative in the person

“of an humble Catholic priest ;” so he would say to Miss Mortimer in past days. “He felt the last of his line could find no better service in life, no more becoming memorial in death, than at the altar, and in the holy precincts of the Church his forefathers had clung to so faithfully.”

She sat looking at the blazing fire before her without speaking.

“What are you thinking of so deeply?” said Milner ; “have I not satisfied your mind about Lady Arrandale? She has fair hair, and much natural liveliness—she is very gay!” And Cecil proceeded to give an uninterested man’s description of a young lady who has puzzled him to decide where lie the boundary lines between *espièglerie* and audacity.

But Helen’s thoughts were across the Channel with Cleveland. A curtain seemed to have fallen for ever over his life for her. Would he never return? Should she never see him again the only one of her mother’s family who had shewn her the pure affection she valued most?

The family arrived at the Castle : they brought with them a large establishment ; and soon after their arrival, a “great deal of company,” it was reported in the village, were expected—“from London” was added by the ignorant, who knew not that from that city could come, at that time of year,

nobody of sufficient importance to be invited to Arrandale. It was then the month of November.

Of the family at the Castle little was seen for some time, beyond the rapid passage of some phaetons and pony-chaises near the village, and sometimes through the sole street of which it was composed. On Sundays they attended service at their own parish church, which was about seven miles from Ellesmere.

One afternoon Mrs. Milner was sitting at work in her small drawing-room. Milner was out: the day was bright but cold; and she did not feel very well. Expecting no one to come in, she had made herself very comfortable with the sofa cushions, and a low stool for her feet. "Not at home," when she was working at some tiny caps up stairs, was an assumption of the gift of ubiquity she had not yet made public in Devonshire. So when she heard the sound of wheels and voices beneath her windows, she knew there was no escape for her, and she had better put away the secret service she was employed on. No one ever yet succeeded in hiding their work, putting down their feet, and arranging the sofa cushions, without exhibiting a slight degree of tremor when the causes of their rapid movements enter the room. And in this instance the visitors were perfect strangers.

They were Lady Arrandale; her sister, Lady William Leslie; the husband of the latter; and her mother-in-law, Lady Moresby.

Lady Arrandale introduced the friends she had brought with her. She herself was a very pretty woman, with those high animal spirits that, united to youth and beauty, have taken the brevet rank of wit. Thoroughly well pleased with herself, she was so with the rest of the world, who had kindly, in return, allowed her to be a *prima donna* in her own line. She complained of "ferocious cold," and was arrayed in the most picturesque wrappings of satin and sable.

Her sister, only remarkable for extreme pallor and dead silence, had been once called a hieroglyphic of the word female. It was next to impossible to make her out. Some suggested she was *fine*, others that she was *shy*, others that she was *very serious*; but all conjectures might have been spared had she only once spoken, and shewn she was only *stupid*.

Lady Moresby was an agreeable, chatty old lady, who agreed with every one, praised people in the most reckless manner, and had never been known to refuse any thing to any body, since the day she had accepted Lord Moresby at the first time of asking.

Lady Arrandale's visit was a short one; she said she hoped to see Mr. and Mrs. Milner at Arrandale soon—she would write

to them about it; and so they departed. Lady Moresby nodded to the drawing-room window from the phaeton as they drove off, for with the kind perception of a good-natured woman, she had seen Mrs. Milner was not quite at her ease.

"Interesting face!" said Lady Arrandale, as she pulled down her veil. "She was a Catholic, I hear: she ran away from a convent, I think, for the sake of Mr. Milner's *beaux yeux*."

"No! did she indeed?" said Lady Moresby. There is nothing so exciting as a morsel of romantic scandal.

"Oh, dear, yes! there was some strange story about it—about her conversion by her husband."

"How *did* he manage it?" said Lady Moresby, as if it were some conjuror's trick she wished to have rapidly explained.

"Oh, I really don't know all that," said Lady Arrandale; "but some one told me she was once quite a nun. It's quite curious to see a woman who might have been walled up for what she has done."

"Not now, surely!" said Lady Moresby. "I don't believe the Catholics are so bad as they say. I don't believe they feel inclined to burn and mark people's bodies as they did once; that spirit is quite gone out of them nowadays."

With these tolerant views Lady Moresby



consoled her friends, and all felt rather anxious for a better acquaintance with the mysterious Mrs. Milner, who had defied the Pope and the Cardinals.

Two invitations had been sent from the Castle, but the Milners had been prevented accepting of them ; at last, one for the 19th of December arrived, with a request that they would stay the 20th. This was answered in the affirmative, and they set out for Arrandale Castle, in time to arrive there an hour before dinner.

It was quite true what Mrs. Milner had said of herself ; she did feel almost nervous, for this was the first time she had ever entered a circle of "great people." With Mrs. Cleveland she had lived in retirement, perfect seclusion almost ; with Mrs. Trafford, in a more complete obscurity.

There are very few women in the world who are so far above the rest of their sex as to be devoid of all nervous shyness in a company they are unaccustomed to. Mrs. Milner heartily wished herself at home again as she drove away from her own door. She was both unhappy and uneasy ; the last being the worst qualification to carry into society with one.

It was the dusky hour of a winter's afternoon when they wound up the steep leafless avenues of Arrandale, and reached the door of the Castle. Their summons was soon answered by a civil servant ; another ap-

peared to lead them across the hall—the term “insolent menials,” being now confined to old and improbable romances: so they were introduced into the library, where the party staying in the house were almost all collected.

There is no hour in the twenty-four so unsatisfactory as the hour before dinner, when new-comers are in the question.

Lady Arrandale was lolling in an arm-chair, playing with the end of her crimson tippet.

Lady Moresby was describing a ludicrous tumble on the ice she had had the pleasure of witnessing in the course of the morning.

Lord Arrandale was reading the papers. The gentlemen were scattered about in differently imagined shooting-dresses. Two very shy Miss Wargraves were Mrs. Milner's fellow-victims; they knew no one there but her; and all three gladly rose to go and see their rooms. Lady Arrandale was by no means one who based her claims to admiration on enacting the fine lady; one of Eve's vainest daughters, she was too clever to be silly. She escorted Mrs. Milner to her apartment—came in—asked if she would take anything—feared she was tired—prophesied the sounding of two distinct gongs for dressing and dinner, and left her guest to adorn herself before the largest

pier-glass she had ever contemplated her own person in.

Soon she heard the voices of the gentlemen on the stairs, and Cecil's step in his dressing-room ; and then she walked quickly in, to say how civil Lady Arrandale was—that she was very handsome ; and altogether the prospects of the visit had brightened considerably.

Cecil Milner was one of those, and they are rarer than may be generally imagined, on whom society of any kind, however great, or excited, or select, made not the smallest change. Helen had never so much felt his immeasurable superiority over the rest of the world, at least so she termed it to herself, as she went down stairs, her arm in his, and entered the room where the viscountess and her guests were assembled.

The former was dressed with that exquisite simplicity that is best achieved by the extreme of art. Her snowy dress was unadorned with flower or riband ; her neck and arms unclasped by gold or jewellery ; her fair hair gathered off her brow by a chaplet of jessamine ; her whole appearance was the very poetry of the toilette.

Lady Moresby, in one of the exaggerated *beréts* of the day, was describing some one's ridiculous tumble for the sixth and last time that afternoon.

Lady William Leslie had a severe head-

ache, and maintained a strict neutrality on the sofa behind a fire-screen; the two shy Miss Wargraves had stolen in, like a couple of female convicts after their condemnation, dressed slavishly alike to a pin, as is the custom with the sisterhood of Great Britain. Mrs. Milner spoke to them; they sat down one on each side of her, and returned to a sane state before dinner was announced.

Mrs. Milner had never beheld the hour of feeding invested with such solemnity before. She sat next Lord William Leslie. He spoke little—principally about a tour he had lately made in Ireland, and his wife's desperate headaches, for he was a kind-hearted man, and wished to establish her claims on public sympathy. He spoke of Ireland, and its ragged, wretched population. He expounded his views.

"It's all their religion—their frightful religion. These priest-fellows—rogues!—what do they care what the people do? Rascals! I wish they could be swept out."

Helen's thoughts flew to the high-born, noble, and excellent Cleveland; she was quite silent. Lord William continued to express his opinions on several "Church questions." The Dissenters and the Catholics were really too much for our country.

"These Catholic fellows, you're never sure of them; they say one thing, and then they mean another. Now, I'll just tell you

what happened to me in Ireland;" and he indulged himself with detailing a dreadful plot on his purse and credulity, which had been but too successful.

Mrs. Milner listened. She thought of some letters Cleveland had written to her while he was in Ireland. They had been full of bitter regrets on the low and fallen state of their own Church in that country. She remembered the anxiety, the grief, the despondency of that energetic and earnest mind on the subject; she felt a sense of rising anger almost at the idea of such as Cleveland being classed among "these Catholic fellows." Still she said nothing; and at last they left the dinner-table.

The ladies' mystic half-hour passed over agreeably enough. Lady Arrandale talked a great deal of the most amusing and idle nonsense. She was so rapid, so gay, so brilliant, there was positively the glitter of quicksilver in her *tout ensemble*.

The Miss Wargraves were three times surprised into an unlooked-for laugh. Lady Moresby became still more jocose after coffee; and when the gentlemen came in, the stiffness of the circle had worn off far more than some of those who had unwillingly joined it could have believed.

Music was called for; the Miss Wargraves sang a nameless duet, ending in "*tra, la, la.*" It was pronounced pretty, and the ter-

rified girls retired from the instrument. Then Lady Arrandale took up a guitar ; she played a wild and mournful symphony, and sang some English airs with the passionate words she knew so well how to make the most of.

Mrs. Milner looked with admiration on the graceful, brilliant figure before her. She was seated on an ottoman, talking and laughing gaily with those around her. Her sunny smiles and varying expression shed over her face an enchanting loveliness ; she appeared the appropriate centre of the luxury and splendour around her. She went on conversing with the easy *naïveté* which is half the result of a pretty good knowledge of the world, and which, in some cases, is accompanied by an irresistible power of fascination. Mr. Milner watched her every movement with silent pleasure. It was the beauty that on canvass and in marble enchants, and when breathing and speaking overpowers by the magic of its attractions.

Cards and a waltz filled up the rest of the evening. Lady Arrandale accompanied Mrs. Milner to her room, and stayed for a few minutes to "chat," as she expressed herself.

She had decidedly "taken a great fancy" for Mrs. Milner. She confided to Lady Moresby she did not grudge "the Lady Abbess" the conquest of the only handsome clergyman in that part of the

country. There was a "*coquetterie de couvent*," she thought, perfectly fascinating, in Mrs. Milner: "she was so unlike every one else." The calm gravity of "those romantic eyes," she continued, as she gazed at her figure in the pier-glass of Lady Moresby's room, "is infinitely becoming. I should like to get up some charades, and put in Mrs. Milner as a *religieuse*. We must see about that. I suppose her husband does not disapprove of charades. If he does," she continued, taking up her candle and walking off to the door, "we will have him locked up in his own church-steeple. Good night! —I am extremely tired. Those girls, the Wargraves, are frightfully shy. What a very shocking complaint to labour under! I fancy it is one of the less serious kinds of insanity. Poor things!—a beet-root blush for ever hovering over their faces!" She laughed, and went off to her own rooms.

Next morning, ten o'clock, saw all the party, with a few exceptions, assembled to breakfast.

Lady Arrandale presided over two massive tea-pots and cream-jugs. She was dressed in most becoming black velvet, and on her head wore the prettiest apology for a cap, a fairy web of lace, and a knot or two of palest blush-rose riband. Again she was the life, the star, the admired of all.

"What a round of triumphs is your life!"

thought Mrs. Milner ; “ and you, so full of loveliness and careless mirth, do you ever think—have you ever felt the struggles for truth, for safety, that have wrung my heart so wildly ? ”

Lady Arrandale at this moment rose, threw open the windows, and began to feed some peacocks. The graceful figure bent over the ivy that crept up the outer part of the wall, and Mrs. Milner continued to look at her with a melancholy interest ; for such is generally the feeling aroused by watching any creature very young, very gay, and very thoughtless. The time must come when “ the green gardens of their youth ” shall be desolate, and the golden links shall be shattered that bound gay hearts together.

The morning was spent in the merriest idleness ; then came luncheon, the peacocks were fed again, and the carriages were ordered. Mrs. Milner drove with Lady Arrandale. They flew with the speed she loved through the pleasure-grounds and over the wild “ Chase of Arrandale. ” The day was fine, and they drove a long way. Exhilarated by the rapid motion, Lady Arrandale talked more amusingly than ever. She spoke of town, of music, of absent friends, of her likings, her dislikings ; and through all it was easy to trace the workings of lively vanity and thoughtless self-indulgence. She alluded once slightly to Mrs. Milner’s change



of religion. Speaking of a tour abroad, she said, "Yes, I saw the profession of a nun once. What a hideous sacrifice of youth! Ah! to you I need not say that."

Mrs. Milner's heart turned faint. Cleveland and his denunciations of the levity and irreligion of the Protestant laity came over her. Lady Arrandale continued to chat and gossip most pleasantly, and was equally pleased with herself and her patient listener.

On arriving at Arrandale, Mrs. Milner found a note from her husband. He had been called to attend on a sick friend, who wished to see him. He did not think he should return to dinner; he would come for her next morning at twelve.

Lady Arrandale was very sorry that any one should be "so provoking as to die" just then, and prevent Mr. Milner joining them at dinner; but she hoped still he would return. He did not: the evening passed on.

Lady Arrandale, whose fancies in dress were as variable as in every thing else, assumed a regal style for the night. She twisted a diamond chain in her hair, clasped glittering bracelets on her round white arms, and appeared in a robe of velvet and sable, because she was quite dying of cold. She sung in that matchless voice, whose tones rung long, long after, in the ear of Helen Milner.

Just before they retired to rest, as they

stood exchanging gay "good nights" at the top of the stairs, Lady Arrandale said, "Hark! how well music sounds in this open space!" She leaned over the carved oak balustrade, and sang in a clear voice, that rung like a clarion through the vaulted passages, the words of Moore:—

"I feel like one who stands alone,  
In some banquet-hall deserted,  
Where the lights are fled, the garlands dead,  
And all but he departed."

The tones lingered on the heart after they had died on the ear; there was a touching tenderness in them almost unrivalled.

"Good night, Mrs. Milner. I wish that tiresome man was not coming to take you away; I shall quite miss you to-morrow."

She followed Lady Moresby to her room, and said, as she brightened her friend's fire with a vigorous poke, — "I like those two Milners; they are so well suited, too — quite curiously happy."

Mrs. Milner did not linger long over her fire or dressing-table; she read alone the chapter she would have read with Cecil, had he been there. She was tired with the unusual exertion of the two days she had spent at the Castle, and she felt the fatigue of body often act like an opiate in stilling the wild remorse that haunted her at times like an evil spirit; an undefined idea of trying to satisfy the

claims of her conscience, always formed the vague background of the future. In the meantime she would pray, read, and lead as pure a life as she could. A voice whispered to her — she held back the willing heart; she would not “yet” forsake all things for the sake of following the great High Priest of her faith. That night she wound round her head her long soft hair. She half said to herself,—“Oh! ‘sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.’”

She fell asleep, and had been so for two hours, when she was suddenly roused by the sound of a bell — it rung once. She started at the unusual sound, but did not move. Again it rung violently; so loud it sounded through the dead silence of the night, that it occurred to her it was the door-bell: the thought of Cecil — of his being ill — flew into her head. She started up instantly; a wild, vague horror took possession of her; she rose; in trembling terror she lighted a candle, with difficulty, at the dying fire, threw a dressing-gown round her, and went to the door. She heard some steps rapidly pass along the neighbouring passage, but all was dark. Again she heard the bell — it was not the door-bell, she found, to her great relief; — she heard it came from a room on the same story as her own. She was still standing at the door of her apartment, when she found some one was approaching quickly. She

drew in, and the voice of Lady Arrandale's woman was heard asking for something.

Mrs. Milner immediately opened her door.

"What is it?" she cried, when she saw the pale and terrified face of the servant.

"Have you any laudanum? We have none in the house—it's for her ladyship. If you could come, ma'am—I've just sent for a doctor."

The woman burst into a fit of violent crying, and Mrs. Milner saw it was no use to question her.

"I have none. Don't wait—return to Lady Arrandale. I'll run to the other rooms—perhaps they have. I'll come after you."

She found Lady Moreshby had some. She herself was the only person who appeared self-possessed enough to be of any use; she rushed to the door of Lady Arrandale's room—it was half open; she went in. There was light, though the fire was out; the curtains were drawn back. At her side stood Lord Arrandale, speechless with the sudden horror he had awakened to. Several women-servants were hurrying in to give any help they could. Lady Arrandale lay apparently in a sort of convulsion; once she opened her eyes—looked wildly round,

"Where am I?—That you, Edward?—Light the ——"

She was gone before she pronounced the other words of the sentence.

The whole appeared like a horrible vision. Mrs. Milner drew near. Lord Arrandale, unconscious of what had happened — imagining it a fainting fit — left the room to send for the nearest doctor.

Two of the women went in different directions to rouse the other servants, to send two separate messages to Ellesmere and Dutton, the nearest towns — there were physicians in both — and thus Mrs. Milner was left alone with Lady Arrandale's woman and the body. How frightful the first moment that appellation is applied to what was one hour before the brightest and happiest of God's creatures! — awful, indeed, when the spirit was one devoted to the world, from which it has been torn with so wild and sudden a wrench!

Mrs. Milner looked round her as one in a horrible dream. Beside her lay the distorted form of the lovely Lady Arrandale — that form and face looked more terrible than when she saw it afterwards — straightened, shrouded, with folded palms and closed eyelids, prepared for the calm grave. Around were all the small vanities of life that stand in such cruel contrast with death. On the table her glittering rings, as she last laid them down; her velvet gown thrown over a chair; a novel, with the leaf folded where she had left off reading, and a book of French fashions lay open. Mrs. Milner's eyes wandered unconsciously over the gay painted

figures, and fell upon Lady Arrandale's Bible; it was in a crimson case, and was put reverently on one side. She groaned aloud, and sank upon a seat near. The sight of that book was to her inexpressibly awful; within that small compass lay, indeed, the "mystery of mysteries," the only pearl of great price for her who had so lately moved gaily about, queen of the hour and the place. The first wild impulse was to fall on her knees, and pray for the precious soul of the departed. "As the tree falleth, so must it lie," rang in her ears; they were words she had heard read by Milner a few short weeks before.

At this instant Lord Arrandale returned. He had not been absent above a few minutes, but oh! they appeared hours to Helen: she roused herself, approached him, and laying her hand on his arm to attract his attention she said, in a faltering voice,—

"My lord, it is too late."

"Too late!" he cried. "You do not mean she is *dead*?"

Mrs. Milner bent her head over her clasped hands, and did not answer.

Lord Arrandale was not a man of strong nerves; he staggered towards the body, and fell down in a faint at its side. Such was the death of Lady Arrandale, an event remembered still by many from its appalling suddenness.

## CHAPTER XV.

THE guests left the Castle at an early hour next morning. The last words of Lady Arrandale haunted Mrs. Milner by day, by night, — “I shall miss you to-morrow.” To-morrow! to-morrow! where was she, with her gaiety, nonsense, and levity?

Lady William Leslie stayed till after the funeral; so did Lady Moyses, her mother-in-law. There was no necessity for Mrs. Milner's stay, and Cecil came by nine o'clock, as soon as he could after the news of Lady Arrandale's death had reached him. He found Helen in a stunned state of mind, extremely distressing for him to witness—it was horror almost unsoftened by natural grief. She had not known Lady Arrandale at all well, but a distracting terror took possession of her. The unutterable comfort of praying for the dead—the helpless dead—appeared to her a most cruel deprivation. In secret she *did* so, and this was her first breach of confidence with her husband. The

first prayer that ascended from her trembling lips for the dead was the first moment of her rapid return to the faith she had forsaken. On her knees, she felt rush over her the remembrance of the comforts she had lost,—assurance of absolution, confession, all the soothing doctrines Cleveland had instilled into her soul. In a long vista she looked back on her lost privileges with tears of anguish and penitence—the shortened pains of the miserable, by the purgatory she professed to disbelieve in—the prayers for the dead—the infallible judgment of the Church—the shelter, the protecting love of those “shadowing wings,” under which peace was so freely offered—immediate peace, instead of the dark struggles of the spirit until the dawn of reality and eternity—Why delay to return home? She rose from her knees, saying,—“I *will* arise, and will go to my Father;” then she paused,—“How? when?” She would write to Cleveland—she would ask him to advise her—she would describe the pure and holy life of Milner—she would endeavour to think a private adherence to her Church would be held sufficient by Cleveland. Would a false one be thought so by Milner with respect to his own? She would conceal it; and then the truth glared upon her—this was impossible—impossible. In the month of April she was to become a mother, and then she must decide. Would she



be permitted to think her child safely placed within the fold of Christ, if on its brow its father alone put the water of baptism? Her heart quailed at the thought of Milner's unshaken firmness and honesty of purpose. "Oh, Heavens! he will not cast me off!" she said to herself. She was roused to a maddening sense of her guilt, misery, and treachery; and on the stair she heard Cecil's voice, calling her in the words of kindness and love. She hurried down, and kept up a hypocritical calmness she had not imagined herself capable of.

Her nerves had, indeed, received a shock they did not, they could not recover, agitated as she was by private sorrow of her own; still she felt peace, the peace of God bestowed on the righteous, must be hers if she indeed could become reconciled to the Church of Christ. Through Cleveland and his faithful, unfailing kindness, she hoped to effect this. "Create in me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me." "It is better to suffer for well-doing." "One light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Such words as these were continually in her mind, that mind which was agonised, racked, tortured with the superstitious terrors, mistrust, the dread of death, and at the same time full of a passionate, idolatrous affection for her husband. She would

have laid down her life, literally, for him ; but the life eternal she could not, she dared not, fling away for his sake : added to this, she was unwell, nervous, and excitable to a degree that at times bewildered and grieved Milner extremely ; still he looked forward to her getting better after the birth of their child. He was always by her side at every spare hour. He loved as few, few, indeed, can love ; and her heart became every day more weary of the battle between her love and her duty.

She determined to write to Cleveland. Cecil must not see her letter. She looked into those frank, honest eyes, and felt herself a traitress indeed, as she thought over the words she meant to use when speaking of him. What ! must she thus tear away the sacred veil off their happy life, their love, their devotion to each other ? Tell Cleveland what agonies he might spare her by a merciful answer ? She kept to her purpose of writing, and only put it off till Milner went into Somersetshire for two days, to see a relation who had long been in a bad state of health, and who wished to see him.

It was in February, near the end of the month. The night before his departure he sat at her side ; they had been speaking of Lord Arrandale and the loss of his wife.

“ Oh, Cecil ! how I regretted your not being there.”

"I could have been of little comfort," he replied. "It is in life more than in death we are needed, I think."

"Not so, Cecil!" she said, eagerly. "To hold the trembling hand, and clasp it into the unseen saving grasp of our great High Priest, that is a privilege entrusted to you, and you alone."

"The arm of flesh can do no more then, than the soul has already procured through faith in Him who, dearest Helen, has promised us the shelter of 'the everlasting arms.'"

"But the comfort of 'a very present help in time of trouble!'" said Helen, nervously.

"It is the natural longing for immediate comfort, for tangible hope, addressed to the senses. 'We walk by faith, and not by sight.' Our spirit's warfare is an unseen one. We must wait the Lord's time for light and joy in believing. It is striving to realise the certainty of Heaven too soon, if we cling to the vain idea of perfect safety, undeniable security, through the medium of forms and ceremonies. Dear Helen, let us build on the only foundation, but nothing doubting, 'Whosoever cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'"

"Yes," thought Helen. "But Cleveland has told me they must *come*."

Next day her husband left home. She was left alone for two days, and she fulfilled her intention of writing to Cleveland. She

wrote a letter full of all the details of their present life—the holiness, the excellence, of Milner. She implored Cleveland to tell her whether she might be considered safe in adhering mentally to the Church he served? Whether she might still number herself as one of the servants of Christ, while out of direct communion with his Church? It was a letter in which all the repentant agonies of her mind were clearly defined. She begged him to send an answer to the post-office, to be left till she called for it.

The letter went to France, and reached Cleveland at Paris. It roused many feelings in his heart—hope and joy, and most unwonted pleasure. The sight of the handwriting addressing him once more caused a thrill of triumphant delight,—he was not forgotten!

When he read, his very soul was moved by the terms of passionate entreaty for advice and forgiveness. Had Cleveland followed the dictates of his heart, he would have poured forth in his answer all the re-awakened affections and anxious love that had never forsaken him; but what he wished to do was to ensure a full return of obedience and confidence, so he wrote a short and decisive reply.

It reached Ellesmere by the evening post. By six o'clock it was in Mrs. Milner's hand. Her husband had gone out to dine with the

Talbots, who had returned from the Continent. She had been to the village on purpose to see if it had arrived, and when, indeed, the letter with the foreign post-mark was put into her hands she could hardly walk home with it. She did not dare read it till she was safe in her own room and alone.

The last letter she had received from Cleveland was the one that had reached her the same day as Milner's first, after her apparent conversion to Protestantism. The remembrance was one full of shame for her faint-hearted abandonment of duty, and fear for the punishment she might now be about to receive.

She looked at the letter some minutes before she dared open it. "He will not, he dare not, separate us!" she thought, as she tore open the sheet. The words were few,—

"'Jesus said to his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me. Whosoever will save his life shall lose it. Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.'"

She read the letter, and with a cry of despair let it fall on the floor. She saw at one glance what her sentence was,—“I have deserved it! I have deserved it!” But her heart accused Cleveland of cruelty. She took up the letter, and with shaking hands closed it up, and put it away with the others she had

received from him. She had never dared to destroy one scrap that came from his hand. Besides her grateful affection to him for all his care, every thing that came from him seemed to have assumed for her a wisdom, a power, direct from the Divinity, and, as such, not to be resisted or gainsaid.

One thing she determined to do, to write again and implore of him to write her a more explicit answer as to the course she should pursue. She would lay before him once more all her difficulties. The answer he had already sent was, she thought, she hoped, only to pave the way by its awful and mysterious vagueness. It had for her the indefinite grandeur of an oracle, with a depth of meaning she feared indeed to fathom at once.

Her husband watched her at that time with an anxious and wondering secrecy. She began to speak little to him. Loving him as passionately as ever, she looked on him as the enchanting form for whom the tempter of souls had made her sell her birthright. She knew Cecil was, indeed, as far as his belief went, one of the most holy, most excellent on the earth. With his charitable, active, prayerful life—what was the meaning of his being so obstinately blind to his own state? The very prayers, the beautiful petitions of the Liturgy he read, were so many weapons against him,—

“From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism; from hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word and commandment;

“Good Lord deliver us.”

To that cry for help she joined an ardent voice; but it arose from a mind already determined as to where the guilt of schism lay.

The months of February and March passed over. At the end of the latter she could stand the misery and uncertainty she was in no longer. Again she wrote in secret to Cleveland, and in secret received his answer.

In her letter to him she told him, indeed, “all her grief.” She asked him, if she became a mother, what she was to do? Might her child be considered safe within the fold, a lamb of Christ, if only baptized by Cecil Milner? Might she continue to adhere in heart and in secrecy to the Church?—the true Church she allowed it to be.

“Oh, Mr. Cleveland!” she ended with saying, “I am in a most miserable and anxious state. Write to me, for the love of God. I implore you to remember mercy, and make my awful trial as light as you can. Is it not—is it, indeed, not possible to unite the life I have told you we lead with a secret, but most heart-felt, allegiance to the Church? My husband—I dare not think of confessing to him the strait I am in—has but one purpose, one way of serving

God, and he will not, I know, allow of any subterfuges. I could submit to any trial, any penance, but leave him! I dare not say, I will not, to you, but I know it would break my heart."

She got Cleveland's answer one of the first days of April. Milner had gone away for one night; he was to return early next morning.

The letter came. She had walked to the post-office for it. It was about six o'clock, the sunset hour of an April day of storm and shine; the drops from the last shower were gemming the leaves and early flowers of the spring; the air was full of the elastic joyous lightness of the youthful summer, for it was warm; the children were playing before the doors of the village houses;

" All was fresh, and with rapture rife,  
As if newly wakening into life ;"

and Helen Milner was hurrying home with Cleveland's letter in her hand.

Again, she with a mighty effort tore open the sheet that held her fate, and read.

The advice he gave was :—"To speak to her husband—to tell him the state of her mind—to insist on her child being baptized by the Church she herself held to be the true one. Living as they were, it was impossible it could be done without his knowledge; besides, it would neither be just nor honourable to him to do it in secret. Helen



felt these words speak bitter reproaches to herself :—

“ For herself, she might attend the service in the church of Ellesmere. It could do her no harm if she, at the same time, openly professed Catholicism, and communicated only in the Church—the true Church—the only Church capable of saving the soul to eternal life. If Milner consented to her doing this, by all means continue to live with him. When her child was of age to need instruction, he left it to herself to decide, where she would endeavour to place the faith of the creature entrusted to her care by the God who gave it. Cleveland lastly alluded to the mighty power of prayer and perseverance in well doing, for the sake of others as well as ourselves. Milner’s love for her might yet be the light to lead him to the knowledge of the truth. But she must be *firm*. She might do more than redeem her former errors. It might yet be, that, through the sacrifice of a few short years, she might lead many to righteousness. For her, if she gave herself heart and soul to the work, might be reserved the everlasting glory of converting, and adding the beloved name of her husband, to the list of that glorious company of the apostles. But she must be firm. He had prayed that her ‘faith fail not.’ She must not faint by the way. Milner, so well prepared by holiness

of life to enter in at 'the straight gate,' might indeed be 'not far from the kingdom of God.'" Cleveland ended with imploring her, in the most solemn terms, to "turn to Christ while it was yet time—'For in such an hour as ye think not' the Lord may cut you off! It is mercy to warn. Beware of casting my words behind you. I adjure you, by all that is sacred, to be wise in time! I pray for you with feelings I cannot express. By day, by night, I implore for you the help of the God of mercy and love. 'Turn you, turn you, why will you die?' There is yet time! the door is not shut. Enter in—enter in—and save your soul to everlasting life."

Mrs. Milner read this twice. She put it away. Her mind was made up; made up by the powers of despair and all wretchedness. She could not shed one tear; her heart almost burst in the violence of its silent agonies. She wandered up and down; she was almost mad. That night, at ten o'clock, she was taken ill; an express was sent to her husband. At two o'clock in the morning he arrived at Ellesmere. A little girl was in the arms of the nurse; and Mrs. Milner lay at the point of death.

Always calm, Milner was at her side instantly: she did not see him—the room was darkened. He came in—he knelt down softly—in silence he prayed for the precious life of his love, his treasure! And those

prayers ascended with the incense of a heart full of faith, patience, and submission to the will of the God he addressed.

He remained for hours in silence at her side. As the early dawn broke over the sky, and the grey light stole like a spirit into the sick room, she moved, and saw, through the curtain against the window, the faint outline of his head.

"Ah, my Cecil! that is you, at last! — Dearest, give me your hand."

He laid in hers the palm chilled by fear and long watching.

"How cold you are!" she muttered gently, and did not speak again.

The power of thinking was fortunately weakened by the dizzy sense of extreme weakness.

That day and the next she lay in extreme danger; on the third she gained a little strength, and at her earnest entreaties their child was brought. Cecil held it in his arms, and kissed the sleeping face and tiny brow. Helen looked at him as he bent his dark head over the little creature. The awkward tenderness—the careful awe—the earnest gentleness of his movements—as he ventured to perform the office of a cradle and rock it in his arms, brought tears of love and grief into her eyes. Was this what she must sacrifice? She was monished indeed!

Now that her child was born, there seemed to be such a new and mysterious tie to live for—to judge for: for a few weeks she might enjoy the luxury of silence on the awful subject. But still Cleveland rose before her eyes in the menacing attitude of an avenger—a judge—a witness against her, for despising God's merciful warnings.

All the comfort she found in her husband's society—his reading—his prayers—his exhortations—were available only to a certain point. They were unimpeachable as far as they went, but he wanted "the wedding garment." In secret she prayed for his conversion. He little dreamed how different a meaning she entrusted to the prayers they sent up together for light and faith!

By slow degrees she recovered—in a month she became a little stronger, and returning strength was accompanied by utter misery. The time drew near when she must speak to her husband—tell him the truth for the first time in her life. At the end of the fifth week their child was to be christened, and then she could no longer delay. She must obey the orders of her Church, communicated to her through Cleveland. The ceremony had been put off till that time, because Milner wished her to attend the service in the church; and it was further delayed one week by the sudden account

of the death of Mrs. Trafford. This news affected Mrs. Milner deeply. The death even of an indifferent acquaintance takes hold on the nervous mind in a remarkable manner. We follow the spirit we have known occupied with the small every-day details of life through the awful mysteries of death and eternity, and feel, like those left behind, in a dark chamber, whence there is no egress but through the narrow gate of the grave.

In Mrs. Milner's state this sudden news was, indeed, a severe shock; and two mornings after receiving the intelligence, the post brought a letter for Milner, the sight of which made her shattered heart quail in fear.

It was from Cleveland, and addressed to her husband. He was in England—in London, apparently, from the post-mark. The letter she did not dare open—it lay on the breakfast-table. Milner had gone into the garden to enjoy the mild morning air, while Helen made the tea. That awful letter—it was like a voice from another world. Why was he writing to Milner, not to *her*?

Milner came in; he laid beside her plate a handful of violets. She could not speak, but she mutely thanked him with laying her hand on his as he put down the flowers for her acceptance. She watched his face like one waiting condemnation. To her great

surprise, Milner laid down the letter, and took up another, simply saying,—

“Kind letter from Cleveland! I am glad he has begun to write to us again. He is in London—will be there for some months.”

She took up the letter and read—her hand shook as if palsied: she turned to the window and finished it. It was only a kind letter of inquiry. He had heard of the birth of their child—he hoped Mrs. Milner was getting well and strong. What was to be the name of the little girl?

Those simple inquiries were, to her, more awful than the sternest denunciations. “Obey me,” was in every line. She laid the letter down, and determined to speak. She put off the evil hour till after the meal was finished. From the frightfully excited state of her own mind, the small details of the morning meeting seemed to acquire a supernatural length and solemnity. She became almost insane, as she sat watching the calm countenance of her husband. He was reading a review—at least, had been cutting the leaves and glancing at one or two passages. A slight absence of mind was, perhaps, Cecil’s only failing in manner; and it is one easily forgiven; for it implies a mind capable of abstraction, and frequently throws a mysterious interest over the thoughtful face and occupied eyes.

He suddenly recollected his long silence, and looked up. He met the eyes of his wife, and she rose at once and flung herself on his neck.

"I must speak to you, Cecil—dear, dear Cecil—or else I shall go mad!"

He stared at her with mute amazement.

"Speak to me! what can you mean? You are not well!"

He put his arms round her, and she then tore herself out of his clasp.

"No, no!—you will hate me—despise me—when you know what I have done. Cleveland—that letter! I have deceived you from the beginning. I never, never changed. I heard you were ill—perhaps dying. My misery could bear it no longer; I threw away my soul for the love I felt for you; and now—now—the hour of a just vengeance is come. I can no longer trifle with my God. My child! my child!—it *must* be a member of the Church. I must, if you allow me to stay here, openly profess the religion my soul clings to. Oh, Cecil! Cecil! forgive me. I am so wretched, your anger can hardly make me more so!"

Milner remained perfectly paralysed with amazement. He really thought her mad.

"Compose yourself. You are not in a fit state to speak; you have been nervous—very weak."

He took her in his arms, as if she had

been a child ; and on his breast she laid her wretched head, and spoke still of all the agony she had gone through. Milner let her speak ; he saw it was useless to argue with one in a state of almost maniacal excitement. He listened to the whole, and without saying one word he took her to her room, made her lie down, and left her, saying he would return in an hour.

He did so. He entered the room, where she still was in the position in which he had left her. He came in and sat down opposite to her. His face was like marble—his eyes were full of firmness and terrible strength of purpose.

“ Am I, then, to understand you have—you have always deceived me ? ”

“ Tempted beyond what I was able to bear, I did deceive you,” said Helen.

“ You prefer the guidance of Cleveland to *mine* ? ”

He gave her such a look that she clasped her hands before her eyes.

“ Will you insist on my—our child”—his voice shook, and he laid his hand on hers—“ being bound to the service of a Church I consider full of error and idolatry ? Do you believe it necessary to your soul’s safety to receive, in this house, a minister of the Church of Rome ? Do you mean, in the eyes of my flock, to accuse me of double dealing, to gratify my earthly love ? Do

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you really mean to put yourself in communion with the Church you had, I thought, forsaken?"

"My God, Cecil, I must serve."

"And I mine!" he replied, clasping his hands suddenly. "If it is so, there shall be no time lost. To-night we part. I married you, in my soul sincerely believing you what you professed to be; I will not have my influence now weakened among my people, or be suspected of having played into the hands of you and Cleveland. Your sudden change is unaccountable. I give you three days to think. My child is a member of the Church God has entrusted to me, as well as my own precious one. If she lives, she shall not be bound to a service I abhor. We *must* part, at any rate, when the time comes to teach her to pray; and, in the meantime, I will not—I dare not—have my resolution tampered with. I adore you too much to live with you unmoved. Years must not pass on quietly, with new ties arising between us. That," he said, pointing to the bed where the child lay sleeping quietly, "shall be the first and last."

Helen remained quite silent; her head was bowed down in her hands. She had so long anticipated the awful hour—so often gone through, in imagination, the particulars attending the disclosure of her state, that she was, in one way, almost prepared for the

worst. It was like submitting to the first agonies of martyrdom that have long been foreseen as inevitable.

She did not answer. She thought, "Let the first billows of the storm pass over me: I will submit to the punishment of my secret sins."

Milner looked at her once, with eyes in which stood the tears of anguish and dismay, and then he turned away. He went out. He felt the agony of his despair and amazement too horrible to endure. It was not possible they should really part? He thought of the past—of the last few months—of her depression and nervous misery—of the influence Cleveland once had: the thought followed instantly,—had he been writing to her? He walked back quickly into the house, and went straight to his wife,—

"Answer me the truth—this once, at least: Have you had any communication since your marriage with Cleveland?"

She did not reply.

He gently took hold of her wrist. "Tell me, Helen: I will ask him myself, otherwise: as a man of honour, he must answer me."

"He has written twice to me. It is by his orders I have spoken as I have," said Mrs. Milner.

"God forgive him!" cried Milner. He stopped a moment, and said, in a choking

voice, "Give me his letters: I will see them."

Mrs. Milner opened a small ebony box, in which lay his letters, and the small gold cross he had given her; plain as it was, she had considered it no type of her faith, and had kept it fastened to the chain of her mother's hair: besides there was the book, with the Latin inscription, he had given her before going to Ireland.

Milner took the letters and untied the riband that was wound round them. He threw it scornfully on the ground.

"The secret correspondence of a man of God! I never knew the position of such an one was between man and wife."

He thus gave vent to natural anger. The duplicity of the whole was what stung him to the quick.

"I wrote to him first, dear Cecil."

Milner could not answer with calmness that tone of soft endearment. He opened the letters and read the dates.

"With this,—and this,—and this I have nothing to do. 'To Miss Mortimer—Miss Mortimer.' Here is the first to my wife, and another—the last, I swear, he shall write to her in this house." He read the first, containing only the passage from the New Testament. "And he dares thus 'place himself in the temple of God, shewing that he is God!'" He threw down on the table

the letters he held, and read the last. It appeared to him drawn up in the form of a treaty of peace between Heaven and Helen. It seemed to him awful mockery. "And I, your husband, united to you by the laws of God and man, am to be thus treated, thus cheated, mocked?" He stopped, for a feeling of sudden rage took possession of him.

Helen rose and ventured towards him; but his was a face most awful in wrath from its extreme beauty, and she had never seen his eye so lighted before. She cowered before the countenance of Cecil. She fell down at his knees, and felt as if blasted with the lightning of his displeasure.

His heart was melted at her suffering; for her he felt pity.

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE next day Mrs. Milner spent almost alone. Her husband left her in the evening; he returned that night. She was taken most alarmingly ill again. Milner was at her side to help, to soothe, if possible, by his words and prayers. For a few hours they seemed united once more. He sat beside her, holding her hand in his; she felt the luxury of his loving presence surround her and fill her heart with exquisite, intoxicating delight: but then, again, this must end. It was, indeed, "enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season." "How different," she thought, "would be my case if I were a Protestant—Milner one of my faith! Good as he is, I might, I *might* have stayed until my child at least is old enough to learn to pray,—to understand. But as I am to fly for refuge, to escape for my life is all I can do. 'Who-soever denieth me before men.'—And Milner!—dear Cecil!——" And her thoughts wandered off to the chance of his allowing

her to profess in secret the religion she clung to.

In two days she was better, but unable to leave her room. On the afternoon of Sunday, Milner, who had hardly spoken during the morning before service, came in, bearing their child in his arms. He drew near and laid it on her knee, saying,—

“To-day I baptised this darling in the name of our common Lord and Redeemer: I have called her Helen. May she receive hereafter, should she be spared so long in life, the spiritual regeneration of the Holy Spirit.” He knelt beside her. “Dear Helen, in all simplicity let us receive the promises of God freely offered to all. Let us pray to have our hearts lighted from the Wisdom on high. It is pure and peaceable.” And he prayed with her; his words she remembered as in a confused dream long after.

The child had Frances Trevelyan and Mrs. Elmore for godmothers. Two proxies answered for them at its baptism.

Milner determined to have one desperate struggle to rouse Helen to what he considered the fallacies and overbearing cruelty of the religion she adhered to. He wrote to her, and leaving his letter on the table of her bedroom he went away for a day: he wished her to have time to think. It was a letter full of what he imagined convincing truths. He did not seek to use

his personal influence, his strong grasp over her heart, by the love he had there excited. He traced out the principal causes of their differences. She clung to full confession,—full, immediate absolution,—such might she procure by faith and prayer; not indeed through the mystical words from the mouth of a human being on the same level as herself, but through the Spirit that, like “the wind, bloweth where it listeth, and no man can tell by the sound thereof whence it cometh and whither it goeth.” Her idolatrous reverence for the one infallible Church (such he called it), was a delusion cherished by the pride of man, for the edifice he himself had built: ‘to the King immortal, *invisible*,’ alone belonged that grandest attribute of divinity.

The visionary idea she had of salvation only within one mysterious barrier, he said, was one of the most cruel devices to enforce willing, slavish adherence, to a Church originally pure, now corrupted and defiled by her selfishness and rapacity. It was temporal power she sought, though not for the sakes of the souls of men. The holiness, the unearthly sanctity of some of her brightest ornaments, was no argument in her favour. She could suit herself to all tastes and characters—rise to heaven, sink to hell. The leaven of truth made her as dangerous as her lies. The seclusion, the

rigour, the penance, the painful self-denial, the sanctity she enjoined, stood in horrible contrast to the indulgences, the masses, the penances by which she softened the consequences of sins to the sinner. Come to "*me*" and be saved was, indeed, her cry and call to all who would listen. Beautiful, indeed, outwardly, might be her theories of perfect holiness and sanctification attainable by man ; but the corruption of pride and self-righteousness dwelt within. All the painful efforts after the perfection she commended so highly, should be the free-will offering of every day from the Christian to his great Redeemer; but once enforced as meritorious, once assumed with a cowl and a cord, and they become snares instead of safeguards.

He denied that there were any Christian efforts after holiness employed by the Church of Rome, neglected by the faith he served. Her assumption of infallible judgment, unerring wisdom, and supreme power, he, and such as he, did indeed not lay claim to. Their Lord and Master had come in the form of a servant ; it became not His disciples to be above their Lord. His humility was an example, His unerring wisdom was that of the Almighty Father ; and *that* gift was not transferred unbroken to all his erring creatures. His apostles were sent as teachers, not as infallible ones ; only inasmuch as His Spirit was obtained by the prayers of



each individual composing His Church in after ages, did it descend to bless and save. No mystic power was conferred by the laying on of hands. God, he firmly believed, spoke through the mouths of the ministers of His grace. But it was the Spirit that quickened, not the means and the men. Therefore, in every place, at every time, in every age (past, present, or future), the Church of Christ was independent of the one who alone styled herself so. Whoever named the name of Christ, believed in His all-saving merits, and imploring the help of the Spirit served God with all his soul and strength; that man or woman, be they who they might, where they might, of whatever denomination they might, such, indeed, "are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Helen read, with burning tears she read, her husband's letter, and his words struck her as at least strangely simple. But she remembered how often Cleveland had used the words, "The wisdom of man is foolishness with God." All that Milner so anxiously explained away, had been implanted in her mind years before by the earnest teaching of Cleveland. His exhortations to "be firm," and free her soul from the cunning snares of infidelity and presumptuous rebellion, still rung in her ears. Then came the hope that the time, the blessed time, might come when, by her un-

flinching firmness, her husband, the idol of her heart, might be led to renounce his errors and come to her penitent, safe, and blessed. She would watch and pray—pray hourly for that happy time, the hour when the day-star should arise upon him, and together, once more united in one faith, they might pursue their way through life to the life immortal.

She left no answer for her husband: she wished to speak to him. He came in late: she was in her own room, anxiously waiting his return. He came up stairs, and into the room where she was. She felt as fearful, as agitated, as afraid of his eye, as one of the first days they had ever met. Their estrangement had renewed, if possible, the wild excitement of her first feelings of love. He appeared to her invested with the calm reserve, the dignified composure, the distant courtesy, which had by turns awed and agitated her soul in the early days of their affection. He drew near, and she looked up, started up, and clasping her hands imploringly, she said,—

“Oh, dearest Cecil! be kind to me once more.”

He caught her in his arms and pressed her to his heart. She yielded to the luxury of reconciliation, but her heart smote her for her feeble resistance: still for awhile she would not listen; to stay, to delay, to linger yet on and on with the only

creature on earth she could ever love, was at such moments all her desire.

The next day brought a letter from Cleveland to her. He simply asked when her child was to be baptised. She wrote back a short answer; it was full of excuses and subterfuges. Cleveland received it, and set off that night for Ellesmere. He reached it late the next evening. He walked from the village-inn to the vicarage, and arrived at the door about dusk. He rang for admittance, and while he waited looked round him. The calm green shade, the murmur of the river's voice as it stole on its way, the deepening gloom, the dewy-perfumed freshness of the flower plots near—oh, how sweet, how lovely! how lonely and peaceful a home to dream away a lifetime with our best-loved on earth at our side! Mr. Milner was out. Mrs. Milner was at home. Cleveland was announced, and he entered the room where Helen was: she heard by his voice who he was; she sat speechless in mute dismay.

He approached her, and the first words he spoke were expressive of the shock he had received at seeing the great change in her appearance.

“You have been ill.” He took her hand in his and held it, unable to say more. He felt strangely confused; a sudden sense of joy at the bare fact of seeing her again,—grief at the miserable alteration in her looks—

affection — duty — anxiety to secure once more her confidence and attachment, and, above all, to make sure of her return to her faith; all these contrary feelings prevented his speaking first.

“You are come, Mr. Cleveland, I suppose, to exact the fulfilment of my vows of repentance?”

She burst into tears. Cleveland sat down at her side, and tried in vain to soothe her wild grief.

“I am come,” he said; “listen to me—for an instant listen—only listen.” He rose; “Do not treat me like a tyrant—a despot come to terrify and command. I have only come to try and arrange for you what you yourself have declared solemnly it is your will to do. I will see your husband; speak to him calmly; represent what course he must take with you. He must allow you to profess openly the religion of your convictions; he must promise to allow you to bring up this child in your own faith, and——”

“Stop, Cleveland! are you mad? Do you think Cecil will listen to you—to me, for one moment? I have spoken in vain. It is at an end. I have sinned, I must bear the trial you inflict but too justly; you shall see him to-night.”

“But let me speak to you now,” said Cleveland. “You must see, you must acknowledge the simple truth of what I say.

It is perfectly impossible you can live a godless life apart from every privilege, every means of grace, and still flatter yourself you are at peace with heaven. I tell you the alternative,—‘you cannot serve two masters.’ You ‘will hold to the one, and despise the other.’ This day choose, Helen, whom you will serve. I tell you there is no choice, none; it is life or death. God knows I do not wish to make you miserable. It depends on your husband entirely; *he* is the uncompromising party; he is the bigoted and unbending one.”

“He does his duty,” said Mrs. Milner, in a mournful voice.

“Then, see you fail not in yours,” said Cleveland, solemnly. “Escape for your life; look not behind you; receive your ‘evil things’ now, not hereafter: life is short—a vapour.”

“Yes, I trust in God it *is* short,” cried Helen, wildly; and rising, she walked up and down like one frenzied. “He will never, never, never, allow me to remain on these terms. I must give up my husband, home, happiness, life; and you call this the act of the God that united us?” She looked defiance at Cleveland. He answered in the tone of the calmest conviction,—

“Are you sure it was not the act of your own unbridled passions? You were warned, repeatedly warned. ‘My Spirit shall not always strive with man.’ There is such a

thing as 'being joined to your idols and left alone.' You may not see now the reason of your being led thus to return. We are led by 'a way we know not.' 'We see through a glass darkly' indeed; but believe, believe only, remember the exclusion of 'the fearful and unbelieving.' The Lord asks of us, indeed, as of the blind man, '*Believest thou I can do this thing?* Be it unto thee according to thy faith.' Scattered as sheep without a shepherd are the rebellious and self-willed children of this world; amiable, gentle, outwardly beautiful in life, their paths lead to the gates of despair and death. 'Who-soever gathereth not with me, scattereth.' Awful words of a most just God! Those that are saved, are, in the words of the apostle, 'added unto the Church.' 'Quench not the Spirit.' At this instant that Spirit is seeking to make you His, to life everlasting. Your husband will be compelled to accept you on these terms; only try him—leave him—shew him what *you* will undergo for conscience' sake. Return not here till he agrees to let you have a voice, at least, in the future instruction of your child."

Mrs. Milner looked round in an agony of the last despair. "Leave him—home—hope—all—all! And now, instantly?"

"No; I do not see that is necessary," said Cleveland, slowly. "The child for many, many months, must be unconscious of

your differences. But I warn you, you are bound as a Christian to seize the first dawning light of its mind, and strive to lead it in the path of truth."

"But unbaptised save here?" she asked.

"That," said Cleveland, "I will speak of to Milner. It must, it shall be done; it is a condition of your staying. And another is your being permitted openly to profess the religion of your convictions."

"And, merciful Heaven!" cried Helen; "if he refuse this, what then—what then?"

"Then," said Cleveland, "I have no power to command, only to advise and denounce."

"Denounce the wrath of God on my miserable soul?" she said.

"No; I only warn you of the consequences," said Cleveland.

"And they are——?"

Cleveland paused, then said in a tone of the most heart-rending and solemn grief,—

"He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned."

Mrs. Milner sunk on the seat near her; she could not speak.

"I have now," said Cleveland, approaching and standing before her, "used the last means that man can to bring you to God; on your head will rest your blood—I have delivered my soul. We have no power to compel and bind the body with chains; our

dominion is spiritual: you may go on to sin, if you will; I offer you my help to save, to extricate you. But the actual disposal of your person, and where you will live, is, of course, not in my power."

"Not in your power! Great God, have mercy on me, or I shall go mad! What have you *not* in your power, Mr. Cleveland? The tortures of the body are nothing to those of the infernal agonies you are inflicting on my soul."

"Not I, not I," said Cleveland, with a desperate calmness. "The physicians of the body and the soul must alike cut away the diseased member."

"Is it nothing," cried Helen, "to leave behind me love—life—hope—home—every thing? My God, dost thou require such sacrifices indeed?"

"'He spared not His own beloved Son,' " said Cleveland.

"God has said we are one; we are united by His will, His word," cried Mrs. Milner.

"No!" exclaimed Cleveland, sternly; "venture not again to name your God as the mover of your faithless desertion of principle! It was the act of your fallen and sinful soul, inflamed by the passions of an earthly heart."

"We are commanded to cleave to each other."

"A man is told to leave his wife and



follow Christ; all that he hath he must forsake, if need be," said Cleveland.

"The holy tie that binds us," said Helen, in a voice trembling with anguish and the sore amazement of grief; "that sacred tie was countenanced by Christ himself: He has likened himself to the faithful spouse of the Church."

"And thus," cried Cleveland, triumphantly, "has proved the spiritual meaning of what He said. The soul is satisfied with the love of Heaven that has cast away the vain idols of earth."

Mrs. Milner said no more; she remained speechless, motionless. Cleveland stood apart and looked at her; his heart was full of many different and opposite feelings—pity, affection—affection, the strongest he had ever felt in his life—firm determination to go through his painful duty—and joy at finding he had regained a power once vanquished, and a power he only wished to exercise for the everlasting welfare of the one he loved so well.

He approached her at last, and held out his hand. "Forgive me; oh! forgive me the apparent harsh intentions you seem to suspect me of; I would lay down my life for you—this very hour, I would: but I must not sacrifice the eternal truths of God to the weakness of my natural affections."

"You are not *harsh*, Mr. Cleveland," said

Mrs. Milner, in so low a tone he could hardly hear her. He bent his head over hers ; with the accents of almost despairing fondness he prayed her to be reconciled to him as a friend, the friend of her youth, the guide of her after years.

"Forgive!" she said. "Oh! I have nothing to forgive ; much to ask pardon for. I have been selfish, passionate, and unfaithful now both to Heaven and my husband."

At the mention of Cecil's name she could control her shrieking sobs no longer ; she rose, and almost staggered to the door. Cleveland caught her in his arms, he tried in vain to soothe her ; she rudely tore herself from his support, and rushed out of the room.

"Heaven, how she loves him !" exclaimed Cleveland, almost aloud. He was not long left alone ; the steps of Milner were heard approaching. The room was now almost dark ; Cleveland drew near the window, and heard the foot of Cecil on the gravel opposite the door. The night was coming on, a still and lovely night, for the moon was rising from behind the tall dim trees, and illuminating the dusky walks of the ever-green shrubbery.

The servant told Milner, a gentleman waited to see him,—the name she did not quite remember ; and as she tried to recollect it, Milner passed on up stairs, and came

in. He could only see the dark outline of Cleveland's tall and commanding figure standing between him and the moonlit skies beyond the open window.

Cleveland advanced, and in vain tried to make out the features he remembered once of such surpassing beauty. He spoke,—

"I have come to try and arrange between you and my relation,—your wife,—the terms on which it will yet be possible for her to continue to remain united with you. I am her friend and relation—Cleveland: you may not be aware of my name?"

"To try to arrange terms between man and wife, who, as far as I know, have never directly requested your interference, appears to me, at least, strange." Milner spoke in a voice of forced calmness.

Cleveland replied with haughty composure,—*"I have come, then, to arrange terms for my peculiar charge—for one of my spiritual flock. Mr. Milner, listen to me, your happiness depends on it; you have prevailed on my young connexion to marry you, to give up the faith—she—we hold, the only true one."*

*"I did not seek to prevail, God knows,"* cried Milner; *"it was her free will."*

*"Well, that I will not dispute,"* said Cleveland; *"perhaps it was. She has now, thank God, confessed her past sins, and seeks again to return to the fold she has*

unhappily left. Her convictions are strong—mighty, for they are the work of One who has declared himself ‘mighty to save;’ she, through me, now requests leave to communicate in her own Church, to profess her religion openly, and to be permitted to instruct her child or children in the faith she holds—the faith, mark you, that made her sufficiently pious and well-disposed to make her the wife of an English clergyman.”

Milner felt that Cleveland’s words were to his excited heart like cold insolence; he felt the agony of losing his only love, the charm of his lonely existence, through the persuasions of the man before him—the consciousness of the power Cleveland possessed over the heart of his wife—the impossibility of acceding to these terms;—for awhile despair, frenzy, wrath, and overwhelming grief silenced the voice of Milner. At last he said:—

“I will not exchange many words with such as you. I married (I swear to you before Heaven), believing the woman I chose one entirely converted to my own faith. I took her. Here she was happy: we were united, I thought, indeed. Suddenly the veil has been torn from my eyes. I find her heart filled with the doctrines and ideas of a Church I hold to be one of the most deeply dangerous on earth; a Church in which there is greater possibility of deceiving and lying

than in any other. Sworn to the cause of my own, how can I permit the partner of my life and love to deny daily, practically, the truth of the doctrines I preach? More than that, I will not have my character blackened before the simple-minded flock around me; they would justly think me capable of any double-dealing, after such a gross and glaring contradiction of my principles as to marry under the cover of conversion a woman I passionately love, and permit her afterwards quietly to return to the faith she left for convenience's sake. More than all this, my child shall be unstained by one lesson from the doctrines of the Church her mother has returned to. That child shall be the only one. We must part: this is my fixed determination. If she insists, if Helen insists on open, immediate profession of her faith, we part to-night. If she is contented to submit in all things to the way of life we have hitherto led, and chooses to conceal her determination, I will then allow her to stay six months to choose; but she shall remain all that time to all appearance a Protestant. It is a miserable delay if it is not blessed to her by a knowledge at last of truth and freedom. In that case my forbearance would be richly rewarded."

"But that shall never be!" cried Cleveland. "She shall not, by my advice, remain

in the post of danger, unassisted by the Spirit of grace communicated through the means of her Church. That were an unrighteous compliance, indeed! I demand for her, in her name, full freedom to shew her true convictions before God and man."

"That she cannot have," cried Milner; "it is quite impossible. I would rather lay down life, a thousand times rather, than weaken for an hour my influence among my people by a selfish yielding to what is wrong. She has deceived me,—cruelly deceived me; but my first duty is to God."

"And so is mine," said Cleveland; "and thus I must feel it my duty to strengthen her in the faith, and uphold her firmness of purpose. She will leave you, I warn you, if you do not comply with the terms I have stated."

"I cannot,—I dare not,—I will not, so help me Heaven!" cried Milner. "It may break my heart to lose her,—lose her for the sake of a lying invention; but it would be treachery to myself to lower my character and honesty;—treachery to her, quietly to allow her to retain the accursed faith that, by its lying devices, now tears her from me; cruelty to my child to permit her to be taught untruths. My mind is made up: I will not live with her, my influence overshadowed by *yours*!" And he cast a terrific look of suppressed rage over the un-

moved countenance of Cleveland. "I adore her too much to share with another the power of guiding, soothing, comforting. God gave her to me as a partner,—a light to my path. By your hand she is torn from me, unless the Spirit of truth, by His supernatural powers, may burst asunder the thick mists of superstition and ignorance that have fallen from her eyes. I know we cannot meet again together as man and wife. We dare not live!—it would end only in greater misery, I, striving to draw her one way,—to keep my children in the right path,—you, or such as you, striving to draw her another. She was leading a life of holiness, of charity, and love,—the life of a disciple of Christ. This is disturbed by the superstitious visions that have almost driven her mad. It seems our fruits of faith are no proof of faith, unless signed and sealed under the hand of Rome. She is made to believe her salvation endangered. All the false-soothing doctrines of your persuasion are brought into play, as well as its terrible thunders. Mystery of mysteries, indeed!—'Ye are my disciples if ye do whatsoever I command you.' Is there no meaning in those words?"

"And one of the first of those commands was, to 'come that they might have life.' Come," continued Cleveland, "to the great Church, of which Christ laid the

first stone on Calvary; the Church transmitted through ages in unbroken succession." He spoke proudly.

"God grant me patience!" said Milner, clasping his hands in an agony. And you erect this into an idol, beneath whose foot you lay the souls of men! You overlook the purity and love of the Gospel. God dwells not now 'in temples made with hands;' the mystic typical limits of the Law and the priesthood are annihilated. You, I, Cleveland, are on a level with her we are speaking of. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free. The Israelite beheld with horror the cessation of the ceremonial law; but it was the Son of God who rent the veil of the temple by his dying groan. He, the holy, the merciful, the truthful, never meant to invest the order of men with such fearful power as you ascribe to yourselves. We are all brethren."

"One is our Master, even Christ," said Cleveland; "I obey him in what I now proceed to do."

"Blasphemer!" cried Milner in the last despair, "you tear asunder those whom God united! It was the first effort of the tempter in Eden; but he could not succeed."

"There was another in the world once accused of 'having a devil,'" replied Cleveland calmly.

"Do not taunt me!" said Milner, as blind-

N



ing tears rushed over his face. "But why speak to you? You can never tell the might of love such as mine for her."

"For her," he cried, "whom you have taken from me by the craft and subtlety of the father of lies himself! You make her think me the bigot, the unbending ——"

"False, cruel that you are! But I tell you I shall be avenged one day. My misery shall not be unvisited on its author. The day shall yet come, Cleveland, when you will mourn in grief and bitterness what you have done here."

"It was my duty. On my head be the consequences," said Cleveland. They parted thus, for Milner left the room.

## CHAPTER XVII.

CLEVELAND immediately left the house. He returned that night to the village-inn of Ellesmere. He went to the room prepared for him, but not to sleep—to make the night one long vigil of meditation and prayer, contemplating the duty before him, and imploring strength to perform it as a faithful servant of God and the Church. He would be firm, unmoved by the natural grief of the one whose welfare he desired above all other objects in the world. Milner should consent to the terms proposed, or he and Helen should part.

“It must be so—it must be so,” mentally repeated Cleveland. “Weakness on my part now loses her for ever. I have only right on my side, he has the weight of the passion he has excited in the heart of a frail woman; yet I have a hold—a hold seized in early youth: the first holy affections of her soul were roused by my words, my prayers; under that influence she shall live, she shall die.

And now is the only hour to raise my voice with the hope of being heard. Yet, oh! my heart turns faint when I think of the misery I shall, I must inflict."

He was walking slowly up and down his room; and, approaching the window, he threw open the old-fashioned lattice and looked out upon the night. It was no longer so, for the first chill light of dawn was breaking over the skies—fairest of the hours! "when night and morning meet" to hold short communion in the heavens, and breathe down upon the wakening earth the pure sweet airs of early day.

Cleveland looked out, and the peaceful beauty of the scene appeared to him invested with a melancholy charm; a faint blue mist lay over the distant valley and the woods of Cotesbrooke—nearer, all was clear, pure, and still; no breeze disturbed the breathless morning at this her rising hour. Beneath lay the cottages and gardens of the village, filled with the flowers and blossoms of early spring; beyond, half hidden in trees, was the vicarage, nestled in the wood—the very type of a happy seclusion, a lonely and peaceful retirement.

Cleveland fixed his eyes on the spot. In the brightening light he discerned the winding road, losing itself in the shade—the rustic gate—the pale glimmer of the waters of the river that swept through the woods

of Ellesmere, and ran on its way through the small pleasure-grounds attached to the vicarage.

He thought of the agonising heart weeping its last tears in that happy home. Oh, that he were but the means appointed to bring her back to duty and Heaven! was the feeling that seized on him.

"Yet why, my God!" he thought again, "murmur at thy will? In my hands thou hast put the power to save; shall I be so weak as to reject the offered duty? Far better I should inflict the punishment of her sins, than another incapable of soothing and assisting—as once—as once she owned I did indeed. Will those days—that influence—not return to my prayers! Yes, they surely will! Again, mine alone in spirit, the heart—that heart, filled with one vain passion, shall be silenced at last. A few short, short years, and then will burst on the souls found faithful the light—the glorious freedom—of the children of God, unencumbered by the selfish love of earth: the spirits of those who together have trod the path of suffering self-denial shall be for ever united at the foot of the throne of God."

Long, long did Cleveland continue wrapped in the transporting hopes of the joys of eternity; joy the more ecstatic from the heaviness and languor which at times hung over his earnest and energetic mind. He looked

forward to a region where affection, unchilled by the cold forms of earth, holiness unfettered by the chains of sin and selfishness, and the full revelation of eternal light and knowledge, should combine as into one magnificent closing chord, and develope the full meaning of "that song sung in a strange land," whose sweetness and intention only fall by fragments on the ear, so often are its accents obscured and jarred by the ignorance and selfishness of man.

That night Milner did not see Helen. He spent the weary hours in all the agonies of suppressed anger, wild grief, and despairing love. He could not look on the calamity before him as from the hand of God, so much as proceeding from the superstitious ignorance and subtle devices of man. He felt, moreover, as an injured husband; as a betrayed and forsaken lover—deceived—treacherously deceived by the only woman he had ever loved.

Resentment at first mingled with his grief and made it more unbearable. Cleveland, under the shelter of his cloth and character, had corresponded in secret with his wife, for the purpose of entangling her into a promise to leave him. It was true, he had come forward openly at last, and come forward sure of conquest; and, standing in all the dignity of sanctified authority, he called, in the name of God, on Helen to "forsake all and

follow him." She would listen to him; if not at the moment, it was only the wretched delay of a few months of miserable misgivings on her part, and suspicious jealousy on his.

Their happiness was broken, their peace was gone. They must part—and the memories of the enchanting delusive dream he had lived in for the last few months almost drove him mad: the full enjoyment of every affection, every passionate hope, had been theirs—and they must part: the ecstatic visions of youthful romance had united and melted into the reality of unutterable and innocent love—and they must part. His happiness and his usefulness since their marriage, by her daily exertions amongst the poor and sick, had been doubled. Life for him, united with her, had become one festival; those short few months had fled like a dream of surpassing beauty and witching enchantment, and he woke to find himself standing on the brink of the blackest and wildest despair. It was impossible, — it could not be! He would go to her—implore of her to stay with him—for the love of heaven not to leave him alone in his agony. She was still there, in the house—she was not gone. Cleveland she *should* not see again. From his arms not all the powers and influence he possessed should tear her. And Cecil walked quickly and softly up the

stairs and stood at the door of her room. As he stood there breathless with agitation, before entering, the church clock chimed the hour ; it was four o'clock only. How often had that distant bell numbered for them the days and nights of love and peace !

"And she can leave me!" he thought; "she can trust her love to Cleveland! To him she submits—with him she has deceived me!" The memory of the concealed letters—the secret correspondence—the visit of Cleveland—her uncompromising requests made by him—and a flash of proud anger and cold resentment, passed over his heart—and he turned and left the door.

Within that dark and silent sleeping chamber she sat, not knowing who was so near. She imagined him estranged by anger and indignant contempt. She was quite still—her very limbs chilled and numbed by the desperation of her heart. She did not express her grief by tears—she felt like one who, having long pondered and contemplated the passage of a deep and dangerous torrent, has just plunged into the anguish of its dangers, and seeks safety in a mute and persevering struggle with the wild overwhelming waters.

"It must be so, — it must be so," she muttered to herself. "The time may come when I shall look back, happy that I was firm ; even on earth that time may come, and

hereafter——O, Cleveland! your promises of hereafter will not fail me. God will not fail me if I die in the sore struggle between my sinful heart and miserable soul. And you, Cecil ——” she thought, as she raised her dim, swollen eyes to the first morning light——“My God, forsake me not, or I am lost indeed. O Heaven, that I had died a child, to enter into peace without this great tribulation!—yet I will endure to the end, and be saved. I sinned against light once; with anguish I will purchase a right to return to that light once more, ‘made perfect through suffering’—through suffering. Yes, Cleveland, you were right; there is no other road through which God can accept the defiled and sinful soul. I will pay the debt I owe—I will rise to the life immortal, purified by the sacrifice of my earthly love; and the hour may yet come when my reward shall be greater than my punishment; when, if it please thee, God of mercy, you, Cecil—my own love, my husband—may yet be mine without the stain of sin attached to our union.” The thought glanced across her mind——“Never, *never*, as you have been here; never as your husband, and the professed servant of God.” She felt the conviction strike cold indeed on her heart. She went to the window, and looked out on the still spring morning; she felt she looked her last on the home she had shared with Cecil.



Over that beautiful and lonely spot there hung the solemnity of an approaching and eternal farewell; she looked on it with the eyes of the dying. The grey tower of the old church—the dark shade of the yew-trees shrouding one side entirely—the low-roofed cottages, where numbers were sleeping so peacefully—the winding road from Cotesbrooke—the wide common—the pleasant meadows—the distant valley, so rich, so lovely—and nearer home, around, before her, the well-tended garden, full of buds she might never see blossom—the shrubbery—the wooded walks—the tall elm-trees, crowned with the nests the rooks were busily building—the dove-cot, with its white and grey inmates fluttering to and fro,—she looked on all these details of home—a happy, quiet home—so endearing, though so insignificant; and, with tears, she offered in spirit all she held most precious in life to the God who had given them, and who she believed could only be worthily served by their abandonment.

At eight o'clock a servant came to her door with a letter. It was from her husband; she sent away the woman, and opened the sheet. It was with the same wild passion and anxiety she had torn open the first words of love Cecil had ever addressed to her. Her eyes were blinded, her brain grew giddy; she crushed it in her hands, and

could not read. He might have relented, perhaps. But not so; the letter was not a long one. Milner repeated all the arguments he had made use of before; implored her to fling off the fetters of superstition and cruel bondage; described to her his despair at losing her, but his firm determination to do so rather than run the risk of losing any of his influence as one respected and trusted by his people. The world should see he was no partner in the unlawful deception she had made use of. Not a line, not a word, must she ever exchange with Cleveland, or any other of his class; she must remain the same as she had been since their marriage; she must not ask for a compromise by means of baptising their child in the Church she clung to. She must cling to her apparent conversion entirely, or not at all. He, a professed teacher of the Protestant faith, could not live with one who would think it her duty secretly to undermine his influence with his own children. Their connexion must be cut short. It should be done, though it might cost him his life: death was better than falsehood or disgrace. Did he allow her to remain tacitly a servant of the Church she loved to serve, the influence of that Church would be used to increase its power over her and her children; she would become more and more its slave. Its doctrines were extreme — all or nothing, they

meant. Were their differences of sufficient consequence to make her anxious about the admission of her child into the Romish Church by baptism?—that difference was the root of all evil. It must imply that he—those not included in that limit—were unsafe; thus would arise a continual source of misery, fear, and anguish for both of them.

An idea of suffering for conscience' sake, real or unreal, would arm her with the weapons of bigotry, intolerance, and deception; the last-named had been already shewn as one of the practical consequences of their difference of belief. Thus they must part, unless she submitted. He loved her too much to live with her on any terms but perfect confidence, entire affection, and complete trust for present and future. He would not see her—he would not trust himself in her presence; he was going; by the time she read that letter, he would be gone to Somersetshire. She was to send her answer there in writing. She must decide in two days. If she went, she might go where she pleased; she should have three hundred a-year to live on. The poor should not suffer either; so she might take it with a light conscience, as far as that went. She knew his wants were very few. He could have left her his home, but that was impossible; he must live there on account of his duty. He ended with saying,—

## CLEVELAND.

“ I am now going to make a sacrifice for you ; you will, I know, feel it the greatest I can make next to that of yourself. For two years you shall keep our child ; then, that time elapsed — if indeed we are all in life — she must return to me. Cleveland shall *not* teach her to pray — that, at least, I will reserve for myself. These are the last words we must exchange till you return to me — not I to you. Here, at this hour of grief and despair, I will not write to you of my love, my undivided affection for you. Unwearied will be my prayers for your release from the bonds of ignorance and cruelty. Think of me ; pray for me : at least, Cleveland will not forbid you to do this. Think of my lonely, miserable hours, of my crushed hopes, of my wronged and deceived affections ; and think of me as one who is striving, struggling to forgive the injuries you and your spiritual adviser have heaped upon him ; and, above all, think of me as one waiting to be reconciled ; and remember, when — if that happy day should come — when you feel you can return to my home with a lightened heart, my heart and my arms are as open to you still as the first day I clasped you as my wife.”

She read this letter, and the sudden sense of desolation almost maddened her. He was gone ! There is nothing that takes a woman so frightfully by surprise as the unexpected

firmness of a man. A vague future of meeting again, and overcoming the resolution of Cecil, had haunted the heart of Mrs. Milner. But he was gone, and the wildest anguish took possession of her soul.

At eleven o'clock a message came up to her door, and a note from Cleveland was put into her hand. She took it—read it, and tore it into a hundred pieces. He wished to see her, but she owned to herself the impotence of her feeling of rage when she found she was staring vacantly at the scattered fragments on the floor at her feet, and knew she must at last see Cleveland. It was madness to refuse the help and advice he offered.

Cleveland came. She looked up at him almost savagely; she flung the letter from Cecil at his feet with calm humility. Without speaking, he lifted it from the floor and laid it on the table. She burst out, half sobbing, half shrieking,—

“See! read what you have done! He leaves me! he hates me! forsakes me! Have you nothing to say?” she cried fiercely.

“Not till you are quiet,” said Cleveland, sitting down at her side. She sunk into moody silence. “What do you propose doing?” he said, gently.

“I want to die,” she cried, abruptly turning round and staring at him.

“You are mad,” said Cleveland.

"I wish to God I was, Mr. Cleveland," she cried, clasping her hands over her brow.

"Hush! do not speak so to me," said Cleveland. "Your husband is gone for a time."

"For a time!" she exclaimed, with vehemence. "For ever! for ever! If you have anything to say——"

Cleveland rose, he laid his hand on the wrist of Mrs. Milner, and spoke calmly and solemnly.

"You are treating me with disrespect—that must not be; I leave you instantly if you presume to do so, for the present I excuse you. Helen, I have not deserved this," he said, suddenly changing his tone to one of fond softness. "I come to help you, to offer you an escape from a state of imminent danger to you and yours: do not treat me with cruel insult, and bitter accusations. What interest have I but to make you happy here, safe here, and blessed hereafter? If you accuse any, accuse your husband. He it is who refuses to enter upon any compromise. He gives up nothing, expects every thing. Remember the anguish the Almighty has already inflicted on your soul for your sins. Remember how his Spirit has driven you back to the very door of the fold, and you refuse to enter in and be saved. Think of the horror you felt

when you first wrote to me—those letters would rise up in judgment upon you, did you not go on to shew your repentance by abjuring your sins. And what do I advise? Only a temporary separation. When your husband sees your firmness he will relent, and admit you once more here, with permission to profess the faith you will have glorified and adorned by your unshrinking resolution. O Helen, dear Helen! time is short; they who weep must be as though they wept not. The Saviour, whose footsteps thus you follow, will richly reward you. Whosoever confesseth him before men, shall be owned by him at the great day of his coming. ‘Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you and revile you:’ prophetic words of the fallen state of our Zion! Yet, though persecuted, we faint not; dying, we shall yet live. ‘It is our Father’s good pleasure to give us the kingdom.’ Arise, then, arise; God will strengthen the faint heart and feeble hands. Into yours he has laid the precious deposit of an immortal spirit to train for eternity. Rouse yourself as in other days; think on the glorious promises for those who suffer in well-doing; think on the awful denunciation I have spoken in your ears but once! At the peril of your immortal soul, slight it not. Under pain of eternal death in hell do not despise the

words I have used in the name and by the command of God. Follow me, leave this house, and to-day——”

“ Oh, Heaven!” exclaimed Helen; and she wrung her hands in helpless agony.

“ You shall come back to the home you should never have left for this. Blinded for awhile, you left it. But cast all earthly ties behind you, since without that you cannot serve your God. Come with me. It is your natural place of refuge with my mother. Once more come, and I will dedicate my life to your service, to your welfare, to your happiness—if, indeed, I should be so happy as to secure any return of peace to your heart. Come with me—come to us; you loved and trusted us once. You were stolen from me against your will. I reclaim you, and will keep you unharmed, as the most precious object of my heart. You shall not pass from my care till, again established here, you shall have obtained from the love of your husband what his unjust anger deprives you of now.”

“ I am to take my child,” she said in a low voice. She was completely subdued. She looked round, and pointing to the letter, she said, “ There, you had better read what he says.”

Cleveland refused to do so. He folded the letter and put it into her hand. He said, in a firm and resolute tone,—



"At four I shall be here at the door. You must come with me. I shall take you to my mother. You may live where you please, of course; but your natural home would be with her, now that Mrs. Trafford is gone. For this sudden move there is no help. As your guardian, I insist on your coming first to my mother's house. You must leave this house. If your husband return and find you here, your bitter struggles will only recommence. The sooner begun, trust me, the sooner ended. At four I shall be here."

He left the room, and told the servants Mrs. Milner was very ill—that she was going to London—that the things necessary for her must be ready at four. The rest would be forwarded, if wanted. She was not to be troubled with any exertions. The child and its nurse were to go with her. Every thing must be ready.

The servants, who had imagined Mr. Cleveland was Mrs. Milner's uncle, once offended with the marriage, newly reconciled, obeyed his orders, and Mrs. Milner saw her woman, Martin, enter, arrange her things without asking any questions; and with the utmost silence, and with mysterious ease, she found by four o'clock all she had to do was to wrap herself in her shawl and go—go away from her home, away from her husband—go with Cleveland to his dismal

house in London ; and so confused was her brain, she could now hardly tell how it had all happened. Cecil, his letter, his grief, his anger—her fears, her repentance, her past anguish, her future prospects—all blended into one dark and horrible confusion of ideas.

There was necessity that she should go—a strong hand grasped her tightly, and pushed her onwards ; she could neither turn to the right nor to the left. It was death eternal to stay in sinful compliance ; it was mortal agony to part from her only love in life.

But Cleveland came. He came exactly at four. He did not speak till the last moment ; then he went up to her room, stopped at the door, and told her to come. She looked at him with a stupified stare. He repeated his command, went to her, and she turned round once and said, with most heart-rending earnestness,—

“ I cannot—no I *cannot* go—Mr. Cleveland.”

He knew the crisis was come ; it was now or never. He held her hand and said kindly,—

“ You will come back, you know. It is necessary you should go. It is right—there is no help. It is your husband’s wish. You shall come back, if you like, of course ; you can to-morrow, if you will. But try what one week’s firmness will do in obtaining

what it is most unjust to deny. Come now ;” and he took her by the arm, led her quickly through the garden, put her into the chaise, and they set off immediately. Her child was by her side. When she had entered the chaise, Cleveland said,—

“I am not coming with you. I shall meet you at ——,” mentioning the town they were to sleep at on the road.

“Not coming with me?”

The sudden wild look of terror with which it was said assured him of having sufficient influence still to work whatever he desired. Before he could answer they were gone. The hurry, the rapidity, the suddenness hushed and terrified her. Her child’s little, unmeaning, placid face filled her heart with love and softening grief. The parting was over ; all her soul’s feelings and anticipations now tended to their next meeting. He would follow her ; he would come to her in three days. Her courage revived. She did not despair—she did not dare. She placed her hands over her hot and burning eyes, and prayed for Cecil, for herself ; and by the time she reached their night’s resting-place, Cleveland, who was at the door soon after their arrival, was surprised to find her comparatively calm.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THEY reached London very late the next night. Mrs. Milner shuddered as she entered once more the dim, dismal hall, and was first introduced into Cleveland's study, where there was a small fire, for the day had been rainy and chill. There was supper on the table, but she could not eat. She was so oppressed with weariness and sorrow that she was glad to take refuge in her room. She went up stairs, up those stairs she had so often stepped with a heavy heart since the day she had first seen Cecil. She began to think her ever having been permitted to meet him an awful mystery. "It was a trial of faith," Cleveland had told her once. Ah! how low she had fallen in his estimation she knew by her weak yielding to temptation. However, she had done what she could to make amends, she thought, as she entered the room—her own—the one associated with such mingled recollections, first of peace, then agitation, and finally of unmitigated

wretchedness. Her child was to sleep in the room just across the passage, the one that had been Mrs. Barton's. Every thing was arranged as if she had been expected. She went and sat down on the low seat near her table. On it lay her mother's crucifix, and the prayer-book she had left for Cleveland when she went to Windsor before her marriage. She was left alone. She looked round as one in a strange dream; horror took possession of her. This place appeared to her the tomb of hope, joy, and love.

"Heaven! Cecil will come to me yet—come for me. He will not leave me here!" she said almost aloud.

The unutterable terror of being left alone shook her feeble heart; yet how could she imagine he would come? She staid up long, long—she could not pray, she could not read, she could not sleep for some hours, until at last worn out, wearied out with grief, watching, and fatigue, she fell into a deep and dreamless rest.

That night was one of the wildest tumult to Cleveland. He felt the full triumph of his victory over youth, love, and every imaginable obstacle. He had saved a soul from the snares of heretical unbelief. He had exercised his power with gentleness. He had reclaimed the spirit beguiled for a short time by the passions of earth. He had restored the name of Helen to the true and in-

divisible Church of Christ. He had fulfilled a painful and sacred duty. He had accomplished the will of God with respect to one of His gentlest and tenderest creatures. She was once more his peculiar and most interesting charge. Oh! had he only been enabled to prevent her having ever left the path of truth and happiness; that would have saved hours, years of bitterness and misery, for herself and Milner: but that was passed, and now at least the next few months or years of his life, if necessary, should be devoted to the safe keeping and retention of her who had once escaped, and wandered into the wilderness. If Milner complied with the terms proposed, she should only return to his prayers. It would be weakness, wickedness, to falter and turn back now. Every feeling for her and himself must urge him on to fulfil his difficult and anxious duty. But it should be accomplished if prayers, continual supplications, and exertions\* could make out the desired end.

Cleveland held a short conversation with his mother before Mrs. Milner came down stairs. She did not do so till two o'clock next day.

Mrs. Cleveland found him at her bedside in the morning.

"Well," she said, "is she come?"

"Yes," replied Cleveland. "You will see her to-day. Remember, that not one

word is said to remind her she has ever left this house, or changed any thing except her name."

"That's pretty well, though!" muttered Mrs. Cleveland.

"You will call her Helen, of course. She may be here for a long or short time ; it depends on her husband," said Cleveland, hurriedly.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Cleveland, in a tone of alarm. "I trust that young man will not think of coming here to make a disturbance some day when you are out! I shall always say 'Not at home' till you come in. It is really dreadful to be so troubled with a woman, who does not know what she is or whom she belongs to!"

"She belongs to us," cried Cleveland, sternly. "Remember, she is to be treated with respect and affection."

He turned and left the room. His mother feared him too much not to obey him implicitly, and contented herself with giving her frank opinion on the subject of Mrs. Milner's conduct to her woman Phillips. Phillips was softened by the beauty of the baby, and professed herself quite delighted to have any thing so cheerful in the house, which was so dull in general.

Mrs. Milner felt a great reluctance to see any one, even the Trevelyan. Frances heard of the extraordinary fact of her re-

turn to London, and immediately went to see her. She went five or six times, and was refused admittance each time. She then wrote.

Mrs. Milner received the note when she was sitting with Cleveland in the drawing-room. She had her child in her arms. He was reading the Bible to her. She was just going up stairs, and it was the last thing they always did before parting for the night. The child had not been well, and had cried itself to sleep in her lap. Cleveland was reading some of the Psalms—those lovely songs of the prophet-prince, so full of comfort and unfathomable depths of meaning—matchless unions of the daily doubts and fears of an erring, sinful man—and the inspired assurances of hope, help, and final triumph over the enemies, death and eternal misery. There was nothing Cleveland loved so well to read, and he unceasingly did so to Helen.

In those promises, so freely scattered throughout the Psalms, of the triumphant glories yet awaiting the chosen flock—the victory of Zion over her heathen foes—Cleveland discerned the prophetic annunciation of the restoration of temporal power and spiritual supremacy to the true Church, now representing the Israel of God, the Jerusalem destroyed for her sins and obstinate rejection of the truth. Those were some of the happiest moments of Cleveland's



life when illuminating with the light of his own faith the prophecies all hold to be shrouded in sacred mystery. He pointed out to Helen how vainly, how presumptuously, men have endeavoured to tear the veil from the future—in God's sole possession; how recklessly they have assigned names, times, and places to the most obscure and awful passages.

"They do not—they will not," would Cleveland say, "reverently hold their peace and believe in the one simple solution, that in that Book of most magnificent allegories they must only expect to find the grand outline of the never-dying struggle between good and evil. The Almighty would not so pander to the passions and party-spirit of men as to designate one class, one persuasion, by name as abhorrent to Him. Nothing, in his opinion, told so heavily against the truth of their opponents as the virulent use and abuse they made of prophecy. They dare to lay violent hands on the mystic alphabet, and form it into a language of foul and bitter accusations! We do not so. Good and evil, the wheat and the tares, will grow together till the harvest. But woe, woe to those who have not chosen the good ground for their seed! who have wilfully wandered without the hedge of the chosen vineyard, and strayed far into the wilderness of dark ignorance and unbelief!"

As he said these words, Miss Trevelyan's note was put into Mrs. Milner's hand: she read it.

Cleveland asked who it was from, as he used to do in past days. Mrs. Milner put it into his hand.

"Shall I see her?" she inquired.

"Of course," said Cleveland: "to-morrow at three, you had better say."

Miss Trevelyan came. Cleveland was there. She could hardly speak to him at first. She wished to know if it was indeed her own free will which had brought Helen back to his house; but she could not ask when he was sitting close by, and, in spite of herself, she was altogether pleased with him. His gentle and dignified manners—the grand composure of his deportment—his unaffected kindness,—it was impossible not to feel the influence of the rare combination. Miss Trevelyan could not help, in her heart, comparing him to Cecil Milner. They were as different as light and darkness, yet both earnest, sincere, and devoted to the cause they served.

She was determined to see Helen alone, and two days after she made her way to her room under pretence of seeing the child.

"And when do you purpose going back?" she said, as if she thought her only on a visit.

Mrs. Milner answered, "God only knows."

"You have not allowed that man to entice you away from your home—your husband—your duty to God and man?"

"Hush, dear Frances; it is not right to speak so! Oh, Mr. Cleveland is my only friend, just now. But I think—I hope—I hope my dearest Cecil will come for me soon."

"Will come for you soon!" said Frances. "What do you mean by talking like a child going home for the holidays?"

"I cannot return to Ellesmere till some change is made."

"What change?" inquired Frances, calmly.

"Oh, Frances! spare me the tale of my shame and sorrow. I am a deceiver, and as such have been cast out by him. He loved me—he loves—he loves me still—but——" She burst into violent crying.

"You have deceived him?" said Miss Trevelyan. "Oh, I understand the whole! Mr. Cleveland has been meddling! He ought to be ashamed of himself."

"Hush, Frances!" she said in a whisper. "I must not even listen to such ill-nature and disrespect."

"Disrespect!" said Miss Trevelyan. "I had imagined forsaking your husband—your duties—was a heavier crime than speaking of a Catholic gentleman as if he *was* a man, all things considered." She stopped, looked earnestly at Mrs. Milner, and then added:—

"My heart bleeds for you! You have but one thing to do—return! return! in the name of God, return to Cecil! In simple dependence pray to the Lord to enlighten your eyes, and He will—He will—"

"Yes! those who come to Him through the only way to truth and life. I cannot leave my hold of the many comforting doctrines God in his mercy has shewn me in my faith," said Mrs. Milner. "Oh, I cannot turn my soul to your chill and unimpassioned belief—stripped of the beauty, the might, the majesty, that invests the Church of Christ with such surpassing glory."

"'There is no comeliness in Him that we should desire Him,'" said Frances.

Mrs. Milner paused. "Ah! that is—where—where?"

Frances mentioned the chapter.

"Oh, yes! oh, yes! I remember; of course. Ah, there are some passages that ——— We must not seek to puzzle ourselves, Mr. Cleveland was saying just last night."

She remained very thoughtful: she would hardly speak, and Miss Trevelyan left her.

That evening she was alone with Cleveland. Mrs. Cleveland was unwell, at least proclaimed herself so much so as to take her meals in her own room.

Helen was listless. In the stage of misery that benumbs the sense of its acuteness, she

had sent away her child to sleep ; and she herself was lying on one of the sofas. Cleveland sat beside her reading ; this was always his refuge when he wished to soothe or divert her mind, and did not find simply speaking succeed in extorting frequent answers.

That night he was reading a book she had once expressed a great love for—Izaak Walton's "Life of George Herbert,"—"that life," in the quaint, sweet old English words of the former, "that life, so full of charity, humility, and all Christian virtues, that it deserves the eloquence of St. Chrysostom to commend and declare it." She was hardly paying any attention, however ; lulled, not excited, by the calm and touching voice which continued to read on in an even flow the beautiful, simple recital of the most picturesque of old writers. Cleveland's thoughts were wandering from the book to the future that he meant to be prepared for ; he was very anxious to go abroad, but he would not leave his charge behind him. He had begun to wonder if it would be possible to persuade his mother to leave England. It was the surest way of securing entire possession of the guardianship he was determined to keep, until Milner should consent to the terms he had now rejected. The firmer he could persuade Helen to appear, the more chance he always told her there was of melting

her husband's bigoted obduracy, and getting the freedom to worship according to her conscience. As he thus wandered in thought, his lips had begun to read unconsciously to himself, till he was in the middle of the passage, the touching and pathetic account of Herbert's love and marriage to Jane Danvers:

“ ‘ A mutual affection entered into both their hearts, as a conqueror enters into a surprised city ; and Love —— ’ ”

Cleveland suddenly stopped, marvelled at his own folly in raising wilfully a storm of wild tears and sobs. She only said,—

“ ‘ And Love ’ — well, Mr. Cleveland, go on, if you are not tired yet.”

He was obliged to proceed ; he read with a chill deliberation, in striking contrast to the “ fond old records ” he gave voice to :—

“ ‘ And Love having got such possession, governed, and made there such laws and resolutions as neither party was able to resist, insomuch that she changed her name to Herbert the third day after this first interview.’ ”

Cleveland glanced at her, but did not dare stop. She only clasped her hands vehemently, and fixed her eyes on his face. His eyes were bent on the book ; they were not raised to hers, as when at other times they flew to receive and impart the sudden

flash of intelligence and sympathy at any thought or idea, equally pleasing to both. He read on:—

“ ‘The Eternal Lover of mankind made them happy in each other’s mutual and equal affections and compliances; and this mutual content, and joy, and love did receive a daily augmentation by such daily obligingness to each other as still added such new affluences to the former fulness of these divine souls, as was only improvable in heaven, where they now enjoy it.’ ”

“ Ah, heaven! —so we loved too,” cried Mrs. Milner. She burst into tears.

Cleveland closed the book; he resolved never to let her see it again. He was beyond measure provoked at the absence of mind which had led to his reading the passage.

He let her cry undisturbed for a few minutes, then he drew near, and took hold of her hand. He sometimes now assumed almost the air and authority of a physician as well as priest:—

“ This is very bad for you. I cannot allow you so to agitate yourself; it is weak and useless. Now listen to me: you must not give way; it is contemptible when it can be avoided.”

She stopped, and turned round angrily. He was glad always to see a feeling of anger, because he knew he could represent that as

a fault, and easily bring her to penitence for the ebullition of temper: she was so ready to own herself wrong.

“ You speak of what you cannot know. You, Mr. Cleveland, have never loved ; you cannot half estimate the agonies of those who have, and whom you have parted.”

Cleveland stood quite still and unmoved at her side ; he paused, then said in a tone of injured affection,—

“ I!—I have parted you ! Was it not by your own request I wrote to you ? You called in the physician, and you murmur at his speedy answer to your call. If you will, you may go ; leave me — call in another — a stranger — one not bound to you by ties of blood, and by years of changeless and undying affection. You — you deceived me ; you treated me with rudeness almost ; you forgot me ; you cut me to the heart ; you forsook the faith I pledged you to in your early youth ; and when God in his mercy recalls you to him, rouses you to a sense of your sins, you call me back : I come ; I perform your bidding, and you treat me as a tyrant, a despot ! ”

His eyes were fixed upon her with the awful expression she had seen there only once before. They shot through her heart, they spoke both the language of intense affection and deepest grief united ; they bore in their vivid light the wrath of an



angel, she imagined, as she turned away from him. He saw she was awe-struck.

"Listen to me ; if you speak so to me again—mark me—I leave you alone : then you must do as you please. Perhaps then you will find, unassisted, you will fall once more into the unhappy bondage from which I released you."

"Do not dare to call my Cecil's home a bondage!" she cried, springing up to her feet.

"I was wrong," said Cleveland, with a smile that made her shudder, so severe was its satire ; it disappeared immediately, and he said,—

"I will do what you will ; I will write to him ; I will submit to plead with his bigoted intolerance, if you wish ; I will beg him to reconsider his decision."

"It would be vain," she muttered to herself, shaking her head mournfully.

"Then how, dear Helen, would you have me act?" said Cleveland, appealing to her in a tone of gentle remonstrance. "I must stand firm, support you in your faith, repeatedly sound in your ears the message we are commissioned to spread. I cannot consent to your living in a manner that cuts you off from all the means of grace. I am offering you home, help, and advice—advice how most surely to regain peace here and life eternal hereafter. You must hold the

faith, or the faith will not hold you. Safe until the day of our Lord you cannot be, unless permitted to dwell within the fold you once, when tempted, left. But speak to me; tell me what you wish. My dearest hope is to make you happy again; and you once were happy here with me."

"Would to God I had never left you!" she cried, her thoughts flying back to the still peaceful months that had elapsed before the day she met Cecil Milner, the day when love unlocked for her the mysteries of suffering, and passionate joys followed by bitterest remorse.

Cleveland felt a thrill of wild pleasure run through his heart at the confession, so long desired as the climax of his hopes and wishes on earth. To make her turn with repentant eyes to the secluded and sacred life she had once led with him, was the point to which he longed to bring her; the stream of penitence should continue to flow in that channel.

"Yes," he thought to himself, as he wandered up and down the room, when she had left it for the night, "she feels the falsehood of the love in which she sought satisfaction. As the 'wild lights of day' decline, she will turn to the rest I have prepared for her in the bosom of holiness and faith. She will find what the cares and turmoil of the life without could never give. She — the pure,

the heavenly-minded, the devoted to God—to be seized by *him*—to be bound slave to a senseless passion—the wife of that anomaly, a married priest!”

As he thought thus, his memory presented one short passage in the first letter she had written to him, describing their every-day life at Ellesmere.

“Cecil and I rise early. By eight o’clock we assemble our servants to prayer. I go out with him at one; he is busy in his own room till then. We go always to some of those who want us. We come in and dine at five, and he reads to me in the evening while I work at what I used when with you—clothes for the poor. We rarely see company, which I am glad of. Cecil’s tastes are the simplest on earth; at ten we go to our room, and Cecil reads and prays with me. Such is our life.”

Cleveland had read that letter until he knew it by heart. There were moments when that picture of a simple, most happy life, would send tears into his eyes. Then, again, he would check the softening emotion, and think with stern scorn of the “easy life, truly, whereby to reach the gates of heaven.”

“Should not those who, uncheered, unblest, ‘bore the burden and heat of the day,’ find their reward at last? Was not the solitary march of the Apostle of Christ

more striking, more inspiring to witness, than the commonplace passage of those who, within full reach of the entangling concerns and careful vanities of the world, sink to the low level of those they endeavour to raise above the passions of their kind? Surely, yes!" thought Cleveland: "she shall own it yet. Mine in faith she shall remain. To that work I devote myself, my life, as long as necessary; and years will pass—that life shall end, for me, for her. And then—and then—hereafter together blessed—she shall, even then, remember the love which even on earth was more that of the heaven we shall there enjoy together. O glorious and blessed home, to unite those who have struggled together to reach it! Would the day were come that clasps in one the death of the body and eternal life of the soul!"

The heart of Cleveland was one in which romantic piety sacredly veiled the wild poetry that filled every fibre. It was purified and sanctified; but still there glowed within that ardent spirit the living embers of an intense and ecstatic imagination. Round one centre now moved every feeling of his heart and soul. It was a union, he conceived, of a sacred duty and a rapturous pleasure, and the duty should be accomplished. He would hold her safe by a strong clasp, indeed, if necessary. Milner should submit, or for ever they should be parted:

it was better than eternal loss to the one he valued above all others. Thus two feelings strengthened each other,—the sense of the importance of a firm adherence to the faith in every particular, made it necessary he should insist on making Milner listen to reason and justice. The more secret and sweet sense of being looked up to, depended on, as a sure guide and strong help, made it pleasingly evident how necessary it was to keep them apart to insist on compliance with the terms he had dictated.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Six weeks elapsed, and Mrs. Milner had, during that time, undergone all the daily agonies of expecting to hear from her husband.

Her days were spent in the alternate fits of wild hope and bitter despair. He did not write—he did not come. Her longing to see him, to hear his voice, to have one line of his handwriting, amounted nearly to madness. She wept, she raved when alone; and then a meeting of an hour with Cleveland had the effect of dashing her down in humility at his feet, to implore pardon for her impatient murmurings and captious temper.

There was one thing she had kept that agitated her to look at beyond measure—the book of the English Common Prayer, the gift of Cecil on their marriage-day. Her name, as Helen Milner, was first written there by him; the date, 25th May. Also she remembered the wild and rapturous joy of seeing her name first united to his. He had laid it in her hands as they drove off

from the door of Elmswood. She used to take out the small black velvet case, look at the inscription, and the prayer written in the first leaf, with the adoring devotion of one who worships a relic, and thus clasp it to her heart and her lips with the despairing transport of a miserable and forsaken woman.

There was yet another thing she possessed, that, hidden from all eyes, never left the heavy heart filled alone with the reality represented so faithfully,—it was the miniature of Cecil, given by Frances Trevelyan. She had herself taken it, rudely enough, from the gold bracelet; this was after she arrived in London. She did not want even Cleveland to see her wear what she considered too sacred for an ornament. It was hung to a chain, and hidden in her bosom by night and day. Strange to say, although there were moments when the contemplation of that placid face produced paroxysms of despair, still the feelings roused by the sight of his writing, the date of their marriage, were more awful in the restless, anxious misery they excited in the worn and weary heart of their victim.

One day she burst into Cleveland's study unexpectedly, for she never assumed violence before him in general. She rushed in, with a newspaper in her clenched hands. Cleveland felt his breath stop with the expression

of her face ; she spoke in a voice of hysterical anguish ; and her hand, as she pointed to the words she read, shook like those of a palsied person.

“ See here !—See here !—He is going about the world !—He will never see me again !—He has forgotten me !—He is going on as if nothing had happened !—and I——” She turned round, and stamped her foot convulsively on the floor.

“ You have only seen,” said Cleveland gently, “ that he has been attending some clerical meeting in his own neighbourhood. We cannot expect him to give up his duty. Would you wish it ?”

“ Cecil !—my own Cecil !” was all she could say. Falling on a seat near, and burying her face in her shaking hands, she hung her head, and gave vent to a burst of almost maniacal frenzy, that for a moment terrified Cleveland.

“ Be calm !—be quiet ! Listen to me. I implore of you to listen to me !” he said. “ I will write this very day to your husband. I will, indeed.”

“ And will he come ?” she cried, turning round, and inquiring of Cleveland as of a prophet.

“ I cannot tell : we can but try.” And he did write, but he did not send his letter till the next day ; he wanted her to sink into the comparative comfort of waiting for an answer.



Four days passed before it came. Oh, how she watched the hours fly on! She thought he would surely come—she would see him; he was only trying her patience. Again, she would see him: she would be clasped once more to that heart he had promised her should ever be open to receive her. Hope became a delirium of joyful certainty before the time had elapsed to obtain his answer. The dark cloud was rolling away; the future appeared once more out of the mourning garb worn so long; and life, and love, and joy appeared to have opened their festive hall for her once more.

The day before she expected Milner's answer, she was sitting in the drawing-room, when Miss Trevelyan entered. Cleveland followed her in a few minutes. His manners were always kind and cordial, and especially so to Frances.

She said, five minutes after her arrival, "I see your husband has been speaking; and well, of course."

"Where?" cried Helen, her face blushing, her heart throbbing, as at the mention of a lover's name only: such, indeed, did he now appear to her, who was compelled to renounce his affection, and then his presence.

"Oh! at a meeting in Bolton: that meeting mentioned in to-day's papers. You have seen it, of course? You have "The Times;" have you not?"

Helen turned her eyes quickly on Cleveland. He replied,—

“The paper has been discontinued here. I do not care for a daily one; my mother never reads one.”

“And Mrs. Milner?” said Miss Trevelyan.

“She may have one if she likes,” replied Cleveland, with a kind smile.

That expression of gentleness dissipated the cloud of suspicion on Helen’s heart, that had gathered as suddenly as it disappeared.

“Will you kindly send it here, Miss Trevelyan?” said Cleveland, frankly.

“Certainly — yes,” she replied. “In the mean time let me tell you he spoke with great credit to himself and benefit to the subject he adorned with his plain but forcible eloquence. There is a fine period for you!”

But Helen answered not her smile; her heart was full of her absent love of Cecil, who stood before her in all the seductive light of his goodness, beauty, and sterling qualities. His very estrangement from herself, his firmness, his apparent rejection of her, had, at the moment, only the effect of heightening her worship and adoration of the dear and distant shrine at which her soul was compelled to bow down.

She remained silent, her eyes fixed on the ground, as if in a vision she loved to indulge and lengthen out. Cleveland spoke

to her, and she started as if she was guilty. He knew her thoughts as if he had read them.

Miss Trevelyan saw there was now no chance of finding her alone, and left the house.

She returned home ; and, vexed and irritated, she began to speak bitterly of what she had just seen. "That man," (using the severest terms a young lady may in speaking of the opposite sex, when any one particularly excites her indignation,) "that man—is, — *he is* one of the most artful or most extraordinary in the world."

"Indeed!—Oh, tell us! What *has* he been doing?" said Annie, inquisitively approaching. They had always entertained a mysterious awe of Cleveland. A certain shade of sacred romance is shed over a Catholic priest in the eyes of young Protestant ladies, who have nothing to do with them.

"Nothing," said Frances, leaving the room. She was too much agitated to talk it over with her gay sisters.

This abrupt termination to the anticipated gossip was a bitter disappointment to Annie. She determined to go and "see for herself." And she did go, under pretence of seeing the baby ; and she summoned up courage to say to Cleveland,—

"When is the baby going home, sir?" -

He looked at her—that was all : but

Annie took a hurried leave, and went home with a hot face to tell her sisters "Mr. Cleveland was very odd:" more she never said; but it was conjectured afterwards that no convulsion of nature would have made her willingly address him again on any subject.

The night before Milner's answer arrived, Cleveland told her he intended to baptise her child.

"It was better thus," he said: "it would put an end to all discussion; it would be over—it would smoothe the way to partial reconciliation at least."

"How kind, how thoughtful was this!" thought Mrs. Milner: "it would be now no longer a first subject of discussion. It was done—over—and it would be one obstacle removed by being got over unknown to her husband. She said to herself she thought this, and yet her heart failed her when she remembered Milner's firmness and honesty of purpose.

And did the thoughts of his pure and holy life, of the eternal truths he had so simply and earnestly set before her, never start up in judgment and inquire of her the cause of her desertion? His excellence, his goodness, his good intentions, were highly lauded by Cleveland: but he reminded her, all assumption of the ministerial power out of the pale of the one true, indivisible Church,

was like the offering unto the Lord strange fire on the altar. He had proclaimed His Almighty intention to lighten in one settled and separate way, by fire from heaven itself. Thus, however fair, honest, holy were Milner's life and teaching, there was always at the end that frightful gulf still to separate them for ever.

That evening, in the last week of July, the child was baptised by Cleveland in the presence of sufficient witnesses. After the ceremony was over, he laid it again in her arms, and fervently blessed the immortal spirit he committed to her care. He received the new member of his Church with heart-felt joy. It was at the price of many tears, that was true, but still the victory was his; and the deed was done, and the unconscious creature was signed and sealed as the servant of his Lord; and Cleveland was happy for awhile.

The next morning came Milner's answer; there was one addressed to Cleveland, one to Helen. She turned faint with fear when it was laid before her. Yet the sight of that hand-writing! direct from the home she pined so madly for! She opened and read. It was a refusal to listen to any terms but those he had stated. He again mentioned the impossibility of their living together as long as she held *any* of her present views. She let it drop with the sudden anguish of

her disappointed hopes—then she seized it again. There were some words at the end she had not read: they were few, but they contained an assurance of his passionate and unchanged love for her. He implored her to remember him—to think of her cruel desertion—of her cruel treachery to him—in its true light. To burst asunder the slavish bonds of a corrupt religion—to return to him—to give him back life, and hope, and her love—which he began to fear he must have forfeited. With prayers and blessings Milner concluded his letter.

Her first impulse was to go straight to Cleveland and tell him she was going to return to Ellesmere that day. She rung for her servant and told the woman, almost haughtily, to tell Mr. Cleveland he was to come up and speak to her directly. She paced up and down her room, thinking what words, violent enough to express her determination, she could use.

The woman returned immediately. Mr. Cleveland was out; he was gone to see a friend at Richmond: would not be back till quite late in the evening.

She was in despair, she could not leave the house without seeing him. Alas! as the hours rolled on, and the time of his return drew near, she felt the chain that bound her tighten and root her to the spot.

Cleveland came—he came immediately to

her, with Milner's letter yet unopened in his hand. He had set off before the post arrived. He had been sent for by a sick friend.

Helen looked at him in silence; the first ebullitions of her resolution had passed off. What was to be gained by returning unchanged—unchanged in the reverence, the submission she felt towards Cleveland? And then his face that night pleaded for him—for he looked so grieved, so worn, so harassed, that, to her own great surprise, she felt concern for him amidst all her own wretchedness. Still she said,

“I must go to him, Mr. Cleveland.”

“Read this first,” he said. It was Milner's letter; a short, and decided, and proud refusal to listen to any terms in which he was mentioned or included as a friend, an adviser, who might still consider himself entitled to interfere with his wife's religious opinions.

“This is not,” said Cleveland, “a struggle between me and your husband, Helen: it is a combat of much more deadly consequences; it is a struggle of the powers of darkness! Fall once, you fall for ever! Remain firm, we gain every thing! On your side is the eternal truth of heaven. He must yield to that. I know, I know, I feel what your sufferings must be; but they will not last. The peace of God will visit the heart that

has given up its dearest idol. O Helen! had you been with me to-day at the dying bed of a true and faithful servant; there, indeed, you would have seen how the righteous triumph over the fear of death. What faith! what joy and victory! Oh, may our end be like his! To-day I have lost a friend of my early youth—one who started in life with me—one who loved and trusted me,—and to-night I feel the nothingness, the vanity, the short-lived happiness, at best, that this wretched and perishing world can give. And shall we cling so fondly, so madly, to what is hourly eluding our grasp? Oh, no! ‘Let us lift up our eyes to the hills from whence cometh our help.’ Let us strengthen each other in the good fight of faith! We shall—‘we *shall* reap, if we faint not.’”

His words, the language of Scripture spoken in that most persuasive and harmonious voice, had a magical influence over her which seemed to associate him mysteriously with the loved one whom she had left. It seldom failed in melting her to tears.

Cleveland left her soon after, softened to the meekness of a child; penitent for her passion, and imploring his pardon for the unkind and cruel words which she had addressed to himself.



For several days Mrs. Milner remained in a state almost of stupefaction; she took no notice of any thing, hardly of her child. One evening, Cleveland brought her baby down stairs, and sat down beside her. She looked at it, and turned away; he laid it in her arms. She lifted up her eyes, with a reproachful glance, and said:—

“You try to reawaken feelings which I struggle to crush.”

“It is your noblest privilege,” said Cleveland, earnestly, “your first duty, to bring up, and cherish this child.” She caught it to her breast and said,—

“You need not remind me of that—it is the one link that yet binds me to life and hope.” She shed over its little face her burning tears.

Cleveland let them flow without rebuke; then said gently,—“You must not give way to these wild regrets—they are displeasing to Heaven, they are most painful to me: remember, that every tear you shed falls upon my heart like molten lead. I have but fulfilled my duty, and you may at least have the charity to lighten it as much as you can.”

She did not reply, but gave him her hand, and he pressed it reverentially to his lips, as that of a suffering saint. She felt the meaning thus expressed, and a gleam of pleasure stole over her sad heart to think

that at least one being on earth appreciated the real motive of her separation and her sorrow.

The sympathy of Cleveland had become inexpressibly dear to her. At the end of some weeks she no longer gave way to any violent outbreaks of passionate emotions. He watched the gradual calming down of that perturbed spirit, as an anxious mariner gazes on the subsiding waters of a storm-lashed ocean.

Milner wrote not again. He maintained silence, and with a crushed spirit and humbled heart tried to perform his duties as before, and to be resigned to the temporary loss of the one whom he loved as few can love at all. For he could not, in the main, look upon his bereavement in any other light ;—though there were moments when the vague suspicion matured itself that Cleveland's influence was for ever to overpower his ; when the horrible thought of the insulted love which he could not avenge, of the slighted confidence which he could not denounce, of the interference, the secret correspondence which, in any other situation, he knew that his naturally fiery heart would have demanded fierce satisfaction for ; there were moments when the full sense of his injuries, and the galling of the chain that bound him to silent acquiescence, raised such a storm of mingled grief, rage, and anguish, in his

soul, as, had he given vent to it, might have excited awe and remorse in a less firm heart than that of Cleveland.

Had Milner been in any other situation—had his honesty of purpose been less stern, his sensitiveness on some points less acute, he might—he owned to himself that he would—have sacrificed every thing to the feelings of the woman whom he still believed to have acted unwillingly a treacherous part; he would have insisted on remaining with her, on devoting his life to overpower and check the influence Cleveland exercised over her understanding. But with his strong sense of duty, his devoted attachment to the faith and worship of his fathers, how could he connive at duplicity such as hers, far more suffer the offspring of their union to be reared in errors of which he felt and deplored the extent? It was a miserable struggle between human affection and a higher and holier principle; but it ended in the triumph of the latter. He could not call her back to his house and heart unless she came changed, repentant, and totally withdrawn from the influence of Cleveland.

The friends of Milner and Helen, and “the world,” so called, when they spoke, at first wondered and pitied, and at last united in adopting one view, namely—that Cleveland had played the part of “mysterious monks” in books; that class of persons who, since the

days of the Reformation, have figured in romances, with dark cloaks and darker intentions. Helen was "a victim," but the police, unfortunately, could not interfere; and her case was hopeless.

There was one, however, who knew nearly the truth of Helen's willing self-sacrifice. Frances Trevelyan persevered in visiting her; she went repeatedly; rarely saw her alone, but still she went.

One day she came in, and found Mrs. Milner alone with her child; she sat down beside her, and began to speak. It was then the month of September; she reminded her that nearly two years had elapsed since they visited Hampton Court together, Cecil bearing them company.

"Ah, Frances! do not remind me of him," cried Helen, passionately.

"Not remind you of your own husband!" said Miss Trevelyan. She stopped for a moment, then added more solemnly, "'Those whom God hath joined, let not man put asunder.'"

"Ah! if God united them indeed!" said Helen, with tears.

"*If God!*" said Miss Trevelyan. "Do you, then, doubt His fatherly care over you? Even as a father He pitieth His own children."

"*His own children!* yes!" said Mrs. Milner, in a tone of the deepest mournfulness.

"And are not the eyes of the Lord over the whole earth?" asked Frances. "Do you not believe that *all* are as much His care as if each stood alone in the universe? Do you not believe that God looks in pitying love on the struggles of which your own Cecil and you are the miserable victims?"

"Certainly, He sees and pities," said Helen.

"If He pities, He helps," said Frances, earnestly.

"Yes, He does help, I believe, those that trust Him, and can come to Him with hearts cleansed from sin," replied Helen.

"Not so," said Frances. "He cleanses Himself the soul that comes, justified first, then sanctified, then, dear Helen, glorified."

"Well, all this I believe," said Helen.

"Then how do you allow yourself to be held down by the tyranny of Mr. Cleveland?"

"Tyranny of Mr. Cleveland!" cried Helen. "You do not know him; none can tell the loving gentleness of his treatment."

"Oh! he is too knowing to use ill-bred tyranny. Mr. Cleveland is remarkably gentlemanlike!"

Frances spoke more severely than she intended.

"Gentlemanlike!" said Mrs. Milner; "he is far above *that* praise, I think."

"Oh!" said Frances, "I am inclined to

agree with the person who said St. Paul was a perfect gentleman ; so he was, for *he* was honest."

"Honest!" exclaimed Mrs. Milner. "Mr. Cleveland is more; he is the most high-minded, the most unselfish of men. Ah! what should I do without him?"

"Without him, you would go back to your husband, I hope," said Miss Trevelyan.

"That cannot be," replied Mrs. Milner. "It is he who keeps me from himself. He will *not* receive me; he knows I cannot, I dare not again deliberately sell my soul for his love, and he cruelly refuses me the simple exercise of my religion."

"I do not wonder. A Catholic lady must have a suite. I do not think that English husbands have any peculiar predilection for such arrangements."

She wished to put things in a broad and commonplace light, but it had not the desired effect; in Helen's ears it sounded like light profanity. So secluded did she live with Cleveland, that her romantic purity was unstained by any of the every-day ideas which are, above all others, useful in keeping the mind in a state fit to mingle with the less elevated portion of mankind.

Miss Trevelyan proceeded:—

"I think that, if I were a man, I would have all or nothing. Cecil cannot—he

*cannot* — allow you to hold intercourse so close with any but himself.”

“Ah! he himself has been the sole cause of the sins which I have daily to confess,” said Helen.

“Very disagreeable to an English gentleman, I should think,” said Frances, “to know that he is the subject of holy gossiping to any one; and most of all to his wife. With Cecil’s elevated ideas of the single purity of a woman’s love, I should think he would reject with scorn the doctrine that sought to sully and impair it.”

“You are mistaken. You do Mr. Cleveland wrong. He always speaks of Cecil with respect, even affection,” said Helen, earnestly. “He has done all he dared to unite us again; except, indeed, that he cannot give up strengthening my resolution to abide faithful to my God.”

She cried bitterly.

“And you are so blind, so mad, as to think that God has separated you by the hand of this man — that the Almighty Father takes pleasure in your misery — that the truth as it is in Cleveland is the only truth to be trusted?”

“I believe God helps my unbelief,” answered Helen.

“Rather say, Cleveland blinds your eyes to the help that God would send. I believe

this man exercises a mystical power whereby your very soul is kept in thralldom. Cast away the vain delusion — trust in the Lord alone, ‘for vain is the help of man.’ Read — pray — judge for yourself.”

“I have never done so,” said Helen.

“Begin, then, now,” said Frances. “No one, I firmly believe, ever sought for light and did not receive it: ask, and you shall have; knock, and it shall be opened.”

“But I *do* pray—I *do* pray. Oh! if you knew the dark anguish of the nights—the weary, forced resignation of the days! My heart yearns for the love—the earthly love—I have tried to resign. The sin I committed in selling my salvation once for his sake, has been avenged in wrath on my wretched soul; my punishment is heavier than I can bear!”

“But what if it were a phantom, your supposed sin?” said Frances. “If light from above should break in on you, and shew you, as a promised land ready for you, a life blessed with the sinless love of Cecil; a reunion with him and the resurrection of your hope, your joy, your happiness? Ah! Helen, do you remember the words sung that Easter Sunday in our Church?

‘As, rising from the swelling flood,  
The eternal hills are seen,  
So Canaan’s promised land was viewed——’”



"But *Jordan* rolls between!" cried Helen, finishing the verse hurriedly. "Yes," she continued, "death is the true test and purifier of our love. Oh! what, indeed, *shall* we do in the swellings of *Jordan*?"

She almost wrung her hands.

"God has answered that question," said Frances; "'I will be with thee.'"

"Oh! out of the depths have I cried," said Helen, clasping her trembling hands on her eyes.

"But your ears are deaf to the merciful answers," said Frances. "It appears too easy to be thankful, happy, and safe—at least in the eyes of Mr. Cleveland."

"Ah, he often speaks of the danger of self-soothing," said Helen. "Servant of a crucified and self-denying Master, he strives to tread the same road."

"But God will have us glorify Him in peaceful happiness as well as in other ways. He sends chastisement to those He loves; but——"

"Yes, yes!" said Helen; "that is a comfort, 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.' Oh, I should die if I did not think that!"

"Die! Why not live?" said Frances.

"We are told to die daily," replied Helen.

"Not by a voluntary humility and worshipping of men any more than angels," said Frances.

"You are daringly misinterpreting passages," said Helen.

"I read and judge for myself," replied Frances.

"That is wrong," said Helen. "Unassisted, we must not read and judge."

"Assisted by the Holy Spirit, we may," said Frances. "I pray for it, and my eyes are lighted. 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet.'"

"The lamp lighted at the fire from heaven?" said Helen.

"That is procured by prayer,—

'Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,  
Unutter'd or exprest.'"

"Ah, that is Montgomery!" said Helen. "But I have a horror of religious verse-making. Mr. Cleveland often says the melody and simple music of the words dull the sense, which is often a false one besides."

"I thought that every means to excite the eye, the ear, and the smell was allowable; and that incense itself was scattered about only to sanctify the faculties, or raise them above the earth," said Frances. "O Helen! why will you *not* listen? Every thing is given us richly to enjoy. But absolute dependence on God for holiness, happiness, and eternal life is against the creed which you hold; your code of penances, mortifi-

cations, and punishments is all against this. It may be that the motive was originally good, but are we not actuated by motives equally good. We have the 'root of the matter,' you have the corrupt tree, with fruits which, apparently fair to look on, are often deadly food to those who use them. Happiness is not denied us — even here it is a prelude, when united with holiness, to the coming joys of heaven; an echo also from the Paradise for which we still vainly mourn, from which we were driven by sin, to which we shall again return."

"You speak hopefully," said Helen, "and I agree with you. But we must 'work out our salvation with fear and trembling.' 'The night cometh,' you know. That great work must be performed by the sacrifice of the right-hand, and of the right-eye that offends."

"Yes, when they *do* offend!" replied Frances. "But there is the tyranny I complain of. 'The heart of the righteous is made sad' with lies. God accepts the offer of a thankful heart as well as of an agonised one; more willingly than when the latter regards its self-denial and misery as establishing a claim on His mercy."

"And is it not so?" cried Helen.

"Not the least. There is but one agony that can be accepted as an atonement. The agony in the garden of Gethsemane has

made all others vain; that is, as regards their merits."

"But they purify the soul," said Helen.

"I recognise no purgatory here or hereafter," said Frances. "'As the tree falleth——'"

"Ah, that is the most cruel doctrine of all! How can you," said Helen, "reject one of such comfort as mine?"

"Because it is a lie," said Frances; "the soul is saved or lost here, once and for ever. I do not see what comfort there is in a middle way cut out to enrich the mass-selling Church of Rome."

"But there is so much more of hope in our Church than in yours," said Helen.

"Of course, or else no one would ever stay in it," said Frances.

"Listen," continued Helen. "What hope would there be for those who die unstained by deadly sins?"

"All sins are deadly," replied Frances.

"There is a sin not unto death," said Helen.

"Yes!" said Frances. "Because it will be forgiven through the grace of Christ. The sin unto death, Helen, is that which leads the eye away from Christ, because then He cannot save."

"And those who die without the pale of the true Church—they, if they lead holy lives, will, I believe, I trust in God they will,

reach heaven at last," said Helen, with a voice of trembling anguish. "But without purification, how can the soul rise up above?"

"You are thinking of Cecil," said Frances. "Might I ask what are Mr. Cleveland's candid opinions on the state of the unconverted?"

"Oh, he does not judge! He only says, 'Strive *you* to enter in at the straight gate, for narrow is the way.' Dear Frances, he exhorts in mercy to one's self to be safe."

"Safe! How?—in the Church, or in Christ?"

"Oh, in the Church of Christ!"

"And that Church is ——"

"The one indivisible Church, founded by Christ on Calvary," said Helen, with a sudden burst of despair. "The Church I cling to—in which I live—in which I will die. Oh, Cecil! why will you not see the truth? why will you not have mercy on my breaking heart? I have sinned in loving you! I sold my salvation for your sake. I have perilled my soul, and you forget, you reject, you coldly blame me, and leave me to die the death of despair!"

She terrified Miss Trevelyan with the awful struggle of her love and her faith.

"And this," thought Frances, as she looked at her in silence, 'is the religion of Christ, 'who shall feed His flock like a shepherd, and carry the lambs in his arms!'

Tyranny, daughter of Despotism ! And what despotism, Cleveland, was ever more frightful than yours ?”

She spoke, however, no more. She went home ; but before she left her friend, she said,—

“ I beg you to read *alone*, to believe that no man has a right to place his shadow over the page of God, and to obscure the light of heaven from you. In your hands God has placed the precious charge of Cecil’s happiness. Think of him—pray for him—for he is your husband ! You have every right to love him with all your heart. Cleveland himself, well-meaning, is self-deceived. There lies the crying sin of your Church. It is the doctrine, not the man, which is at fault. He must bind you with his own chain ; his purposes are holy and just ; his means unjustifiable, because they are the invention of man. He imagines that he binds your soul to Christ ! The Church takes care that you shall be bound more firmly to her. The spiritual Church is in every denomination, in all who trust their Saviour simply ; the temporal, visible Church, is comparatively *nothing*. It is useful as a well-organised body of teachers—nothing more. Pray, pray, and read, and you will understand !”

Helen was left alone in a state little short of madness. The words of Frances

had roused her — had lashed her up, as the prisoner is stirred who first observes the faint pale ray of light penetrate the darkness of his cell.

“How can these things be?” she thought.  
“If—if Cleveland were wrong ——!”

Her head turned giddy, her breath almost stopped at the sudden new-born idea: she was as one in a dream.

Cleveland sat alone with her that evening; she was listless when he spoke, because occupied with her own thoughts.

Cleveland’s heart was filled with sudden alarm.

“Have you been out?” he said, kindly.

“No!”

“But you said you had seen some friends to-day?”

“Yes: Frances Trevelyan was here.”

“Well, and what were *her* news?”

“Her news, Mr. Cleveland! Ah! ——”

She stopped, and felt frightened at what she had said; but Cleveland asked no more questions of the kind. She was busily working.

“Shall I read?” said Cleveland, gently.

“If you please.”

He drew near.

“You are unkind to-night! You are not speaking to me as usual! You must tell me what is the matter with you.”

There is nothing so confounding as an unexpected frankness ; tears came into the eyes of Helen.

"Cecil ! my husband ! Ah, Mr. Cleveland, am I never, never to see my own Cecil again ?"

"It will depend upon himself," said Cleveland, kindly. "I will write to him, of course, if you wish it."

"Useless, that," she answered ; "he will send me a letter that will break my heart to get. But I am going to write to him. I will, I will !"

"Certainly," replied Cleveland. "Indeed I have often been surprised at your not corresponding regularly. Why should you not ? You might do him endless service."

"I—I might ! He would not listen to me."

"Then do not write."

"But I will—I shall write."

"Of course ; pray do. Dear Helen, do not treat me so cruelly : I am not your gaoler. You may leave me this hour if you wish it."

"Ah, Mr. Cleveland, you know I *cannot* ! I am unchanged *as yet* in my belief." She looked at him, expecting to see him start ; but, though his heart leaped with the sudden terror, he never moved one muscle. "The day may come," she said, "when I shall feel inclined to question your power to keep me here, far from my home—from my husband !"



"You do me cruel injustice," said Cleveland. "You insult me as a man—you wrong me as a friend—as your spiritual guide. You know you may say what you please; my affection for you is your own shield. But how *can* you—how *can* you so treacherously turn against me? Go, go, if you will! I have done what I could—I leave you."

He threw aside the book and went down stairs. They read no more that night.

Helen continued to stare in consternation at the volume he had flung on the table before her. She felt as if she had cast a stone against a building of matchless solidity and strength, and beauty, and unexpectedly saw it shake to its foundations. An entrance was made, but she feared to take advantage of it and pursue her discoveries. She stood as before the gate of an enchanter's palace—silent, awe-struck by the *prestige* of its mystic superhuman majesty. She trembled, she wept, she wished to make peace. He had parted from her in anger! He, the holy, the humble, yet the awful Cleveland! She held her breath when thinking of her own audacity; but she could not bear to let the night pass without a reconciliation: she rose and went down stairs.

Cleveland sought his room in the first agitation of unexpected terror. "She will leave me," was all he could think: the sus-

picion maddened him. Fiercely he added,—  
“She shall not! Armed as I am with truth, justice, and mercy to her soul, I will triumph still.” His thoughts flew to Milner, —to Ellesmere. He found one gleam of savage hatred glitter like withering lightning over his worn and wretched heart, and he fell on his knees, impelled alike by heaven and hell to fly from the darkness and rise to the light his soul honestly longed for. He prayed in the anguish of a heart bursting with crushed hopes and miserable forebodings. Better he should die than witness her fall from truth—from eternal life! Better she should die, a thousand times, than return to reckless sin and the indulgence of an unholy passion! And it was so,—it was so in his eyes. Love for a priest of God,—for one set apart to holiness!—it was horrible desecration in every way. She should not be lost body and soul. He prayed vehemently for strength to hold her faithful,—to sacrifice even her happiness for her soul’s welfare. Until his dying day that prayer dwelt in the memory of Cleveland!

He heard a light step at his door. He rose trembling, but he could not speak; he heard his name murmured low. The tears rushed from his burning eyes, but he took no notice. He heard the step ascend the stair, and was silent still, but he clasped his hands in agony of spirit and blessed her

a thousand times. In his lonely wretchedness he gave way to passionate lamentations; they assumed the form of prayers, but they were the wild complaints of a sorely wrung and most miserable heart; a heart filled by God himself with every noble, pure, and holy affection, yet darkened and shadowed by the vain effort to root them up.

A second time she came near the door. He could not answer her; he could not let her see him, so fallen, so sunk in his own esteem. Pride, the natural pride of man, rose up, and it was the pride of one who thought the honour of God, as well as his own, was concerned in preserving calm composure in the eyes of a disciple and a woman.

A third time she came. Cleveland opened the door himself, and she stood before him like a criminal. She raised her eyes to the noble face above her. It bore the traces of deep grief—of wounded affection. Helen's was not the nature to shrink from the acknowledgment of error, even while it humbled her; she seized his hand in both of hers, and for the second time in her life covered it with the tears of bitter self-upbraiding and repentance.

Cleveland withdrew it from her clasp, saying, "Enough!—I forgive you! but I implore you not to trample again on the faithful heart that seeks to serve you for all eternity. I am miserable through your suf-

ferings : do not cruelly overload me with more than you can help."

He turned away ; she followed him,—she implored him to forgive her ; she would never do any thing to hurt him again. She had spoken most inconsiderately ; she would follow his commands to the death. She was bound to him by every tie of gratitude and affection.

The sun shone out on Cleveland once more. He felt a vivifying ray illuminate and warm his sinking heart ; he was still trusted,—still confided in,—still loved. A smile came over his face,—an irradiation rarely seen there, for some time passed. In Helen's eyes it glorified his countenance like that of an angel, when rejoicing over the return of a repentant sinner.

Next day she met Frances Trevelyan. The latter told her they were going out of town till Christmas ; she herself was about, rather unexpectedly, to accompany the following morning her aunt, Mrs. Talbot : they were going to pay a visit in the country together. Frances begged Helen to come and drink tea with them. Ah ! how well the latter remembered her first meeting with Cecil in those rooms—the seeds of present anguish sown in the secret joys of their early acquaintance, the rare and mysterious sympathy that had even there united them ; and now —— !

Still she determined to go ; she told Cleveland at dinner.

“ Very well,” he replied.

“ She is going to Mrs. Trevelyan’s to-night,” he said to his mother, elevating his voice.

“ What ? ” said Mrs. Cleveland. Her conversation now consisted of interrogatory “ whats ” and assenting or dissenting “ ums.”

At eight o’clock Helen put on her shawl ; she came down dressed in white, for the first time for a long while ; a black lace mantilla was wrapped round her : an unwonted flush burnt in her cheeks, and she had smoothed her brown braids with more care than usual. She rehearsed, in a feverish dream of her heart, her first meeting with Cecil. She had very rarely been to the Trevelyans’ house since her return to Cleveland’s ; never in the evening at all.

She found Cleveland at the door, ready to accompany her.

“ Oh ! Hardy will come,” she said. “ Do not give yourself the trouble of crossing the street with me, Mr. Cleveland.”

“ I am going to Mrs. Trevelyan’s,” he said,—“ if I may, at least.”

“ May !—Of course ! ” but she was confounded. She had imagined she was to go alone, and dream away the night on the same sofa where she had sat with Cecil at her side.

She entered the room with Cleveland. The Trevelyans were extremely amazed.

Cleveland answered for his appearance in the calmest and most agreeable manner. They were all personally flattered, except Frances. There were about twenty or thirty people more than they had expected; because some friends had brought friends. Cleveland sat opposite Helen. She looked round in mute and sad remembrance at the very spot where first her eyes had seen Cecil.

The room appeared invested with a solemnity which was the creation of her own wild despair. There she had met with the adored image which must for ever fill her heart; there had arisen the sunlight of their love; there had she first trembled beneath the spell of a mighty and never-dying affection.

Music began. The first chord thrilled to her very heart's core. The sound of melody, dormant so long, rose upon her ear with the sweetness of a spirit's voice, and with its supernatural power too.

That strain breathed fire over her whole being, and gave instant life to the sensations that lay, not dormant, but pacified. Music, as "the mysterious guardian of memory," unlocked the gates of softest, tenderest remembrance, maddening regret, and hope turned to despair.

She closed her eyes, and drank in with impassioned eagerness the full sweetness and bewitching mournfulness of one of Moore's saddest and sweetest songs. Two voices

chimed well together in that lovely air,  
which popularity has never made vulgar,—

“Oft in the stilly night,  
Ere slumber’s chain has bound me,  
Fond memory brings the light  
Of other days around me.”

She thought of the days they had spent together at Arrandale—of Lady Arrandale—of her lost loveliness—of her horrible and sudden death—then of Cecil. The past, wrapped in the garment it always assumes of surpassing and melancholy enchantment, stood before her weary eyes and yearning heart. Life, to look back on, seemed a dream—half heaven, half torture; and the future—the future suddenly glared upon her excited soul with the gloom of hopeless, miserable separation in its train. Still the music floated over her confused brain, and told its harmonious tale to other ears than hers.

Cleveland had so completely isolated himself from all the sympathies of the world, that the lighted rooms, the sudden burst of music, and music not sacred, but bearing on its wings all the passionate tenderness of earth and love, flung over him a spell he hardly knew whether to call of pleasure or of pain. It recalled days long, long passed, when as a young, a very young man, he had mingled in gay crowds, and felt that there were admiration and approval in the eyes that

looked on him. An airy and flattering vision of what he had been shot across his heart. For an instant he glanced over all that he had sacrificed. Life, youth, love, and worldly ambition, passed in brief but brilliant review. He bent his head low; and as he raised his eyes slowly again, they fell with melancholy and touching power on those of Helen.

The past, definite or indefinite, occupied both; and Helen's eyes lingered on those of Cleveland.

He knew their meaning; and he thought in his secret soul, all—all—past, present, and future, he would willingly lay down; yes, life itself, to make her happy—happy in the knowledge and practice of the truth.

He rose and sat down at her side. She felt that she clung to his sympathy that night more than ever. She was glad of it; for she had not expected it of herself. She spoke to him kindly—softly; and the gentle words fell like dew on the sad and now fevered heart of Cleveland.

They went away early. When they reached home, Helen said,—

“Mr. Cleveland, I am going to write to Cecil to-night.”

He turned his eyes on her.

“Yes!” she said, more vehemently. “I can endure this no longer! I shall write to him.”



She clasped his hand kindly, and left him.

That night she wrote ; her letter ended thus :—

“Come to me, at least, Cecil ; my own — my only love, Cecil. I have been to-night in the very room where first we met — that night I first saw you. My heart clings to every memory of you : by day I mourn, by night I watch. I wake to think of you, to pray for you, to ask myself again and again how you can be so cruel to me ? You said — you often said — you loved me entirely, and yet you will not come. You are never, never, I swear to you, absent from me in spirit, and yet you will not come. I tell you my heart is breaking, and you will not come. You have — *you have* changed ! I am sure you have ; and I, oh ! Heaven, Cecil — I shall die if I lose one ray of the love that alone illuminates my most wretched existence ! To-night Heaven has fled from me ! Earth alone is present ! Sinful my love for you may be, but it rules me as strongly as the first day we met and you owned you loved me. Do you remember that December evening, when we walked home in the cold twilight beneath the fir-trees of Cotesbrooke ? I dare not think of it. Your face, your voice, my Cecil ! haunt me to-night as if — as if, oh ! merciful Heaven — I was never, never to see you again —”

The page was written amid the tempests-

tuous tears and sobs of reckless grief, and sealed, and laid on the table. In the morning she saw it lying ready to go. That letter! She looked at it as at something which held the mystic power of bringing Cecil to her side. She sent it down stairs. Cleveland saw it; he took it up; looked with sad suspicion at the handwriting. He guessed what effect it *might* have. "Some," he thought, "would think themselves justified in burning this; but she trusts to my honour, and she shall not be deceived." One thing he did to nullify the effect of any tender weakness on her part. He wrote by the same post to Ellesmere, praying Cecil Milner to return, reproaching him for his bigotry and intolerance, and asserting that there was no obstacle to their permanent reunion, except such as he himself might raise up; for Helen was anxious to go to him; to go, however, as a Christian devoted to the faith she served, and would for ever serve, with all her soul and strength.

He sent both the letters. Before Helen came down, he received one from his old friend Rossmore. He was at the Isle of Wight, and in a very infirm state of health. He begged Cleveland to come and see him. Cleveland left town that day. He went to Helen, told her of his intended absence, and was beyond measure gratified at the sudden expression of sorrow and surprise in

her face. She expected he would have stayed just then. It looked as if he did not think she would be able to return to Ellesmere so soon.

When he was gone, and she was left fairly to herself, a terrible sense of loneliness and insecurity came over her. Frances Trevelyan was gone too. She remained for hours in idle musing and most painful meditation.

When Cleveland was away she felt thrown on the strength of her own faith, responsible, so to speak, for her own soul's safety : and this was to her a most frightful uncertainty. She spent the evenings of Cleveland's absence, not in the drawing-room, but beside her child's bed, watching its sleep, sitting with Cecil's picture clasped in her hand, alone, unseen. And those were moments of the saddest misery. She gave herself up to the maddening influence of her regrets and her grief. And then came the hour of prayer, and while commending herself to the protection of Heaven she felt how deeply she sinned in thus preferring the creature to the Creator. So imbued had she now become with the idea of the unholiness of marriage with an ordained minister, that she could only rest her hopes on persuading Cecil to give up his profession, and then, as a member of the one true Church, he might make atonement, as best he could, for sins past. Why should he not? Cleveland's life was already

far more self-denying than the Church would ever require him to lead. Why should he refuse to be reconciled?

At the same time the advice of Frances recurred to her continually. She read every night, by stealth, the beautiful words of the English book of Common-Prayer; and there were moments when the possibility of escape from the bondage, the misery which she suffered, burst upon her with a most perplexing joy. Not more gladly did the shepherds "abiding in the field" first hear the heavenly chorus ring out from the skies of night, than Helen would have hailed the blessed truth and promise of "Peace, goodwill to man." But that truth which descended on hearts of simple ignorance, cannot settle on a spirit which is fortified and clad in the armour of man's inventions.

On the fourth day after Cleveland's departure she received Cecil's answer—and again went through the enfeebling agonies of suspense, fear, and miserable doubt. Cecil had received both letters the same day; they were laid on his lonely breakfast-table. He saw the writing of one—he seized it, and felt the rapture and despair of a lover, who is assured of being loved, yet knows that he can never draw nearer to the desired end of his wishes. Cleveland's letter he read—he tore it into pieces.

"How! does he dare again insult me with

his proposals? He has robbed me of all that made life dear—hypocrite! base and cowardly! and I must bear in silence! And you, Helen, my love, my wife, you can suffer your eyes to be blinded—to be blinded by such superstitious folly, such dishonourable duplicity, and cowardly cruelty! No, never, never, would he permit her to return to defile their happy home, their once blessed and perfect union, with the double-dealing, the artifice, the tyranny, of such an adviser as Cleveland!”

So he wrote a letter, full of cool contempt, to Cleveland. He could hardly treat him as a minister of God; yet bitterly—oh, sorely had Cecil Milner struggled to overcome his anger. He wished to forgive—he could have resigned himself to the loss even of Helen by death; but to lose her love, his own happiness thus, it was, indeed, bitter aggravation to his misery.

To Helen he wrote, too. He poured out before her all the tenderness he felt for her—love, as strong as on that day when first the confession was hardly wrung from his unwilling heart by their approaching separation. He remembered, as well as she did, every word, every instant, every precious moment of that one short walk; but the more intensely he loved her, the less would he permit her to return to him on any terms save his own. She must discard every atom

of lingering faith in the Church of which Cleveland—the cruel and crafty—was the minister; for their child must be free of every stain of doctrine which had led to such deplorable consequences.

He implored of her to reflect, to read, to judge for herself,—to remember that the light which once shone in brightness on her path was still the same,—to remember their happy, innocent, and active life, when, united in heart and hand, they went forth to relieve the sick, to feed the hungry, and preach and speak the words of their heavenly Master,—to bring to mind the simple truth of God—his promises to those who receive the word as “a little child,” not armed with the doubts—the credulous fears—the “cunningly contrived fables,” which Cleveland had wound round her heart in early youth.

With fondest prayers on her beloved head, Milner ended his second letter; but there was visible through the whole unshaken firmness and honesty of purpose.

Mrs. Milner read her husband's letter, and sunk on her chair speechless, in the dumb horror of believing herself entirely forsaken. With the remote, vague love of excitement, more inherent in woman than in man, she had not calculated on the prudent firmness that refused to lash up its feelings unnecessarily. Cecil would not come for the express purpose of having his heart insulted,

lacerated, and maddened over and over again, with the renewed and bitter sense of Cleveland's superior influence; which must be the case, did she tell the real truth. Cecil, though he valued her love above all other things on earth, would not receive from passion what he could not have from principle and conviction.

It were vain to tell, if, indeed, human language *could* tell, how this letter affected her. She seemed like one under a spell; indeed she remained in almost total solitude till Cleveland's return; for her despairing anger had turned into sullen silence.

He came home late in the evening: he found her not in the usual meeting room, and went to her door; he longed to see her, to know the tendency of Milner's answer. He knocked, and she told him he might come in, if he liked.

He was alarmed at the tone of her voice, and went in; she was sitting in the dark. Cleveland held a light in his hand, for it was nine o'clock on an autumn evening; the lamp threw a sickly glare over the face that looked up to him. She had seated herself at the side of her sleeping child, having sent away the woman to her supper down stairs. Her tangled hair, her neglected dress, her swollen eyes, made her look so thoroughly miserable—so wretched, that Cleveland, in dismay, cried,—

"Heaven! what has happened?—are you ill?"

"Ill?" she cried; "yes, Mr. Cleveland! sick at heart—despairing—dying! But it cannot last. Read *that!*" she cried; "I have been reading *this!*"

With a look of wild triumph, she shook before him the leaves of her English Prayer-book; and from her breast she drew Cecil's crushed letter and threw it at his feet, and then turned away.

Cleveland submissively returned her the letter.

"Read, I tell you!"

Cleveland opened it.

"You will remember," he said in a trembling voice, "it is the first I have ever read of my own accord; I have never invaded your secrecy."

"You are merciful, indeed," she said, disdainfully.

"Ah, Helen, follow my example then."

And he read on—and on. He read the passionate declarations of love—the tender remembrances of their first betrothal—the allusion to their past happy and harmless life; and before him stood the scenes and the figures arrayed in the pristine glory and innocent affection of lost Eden! What an enchanted world lay unseen around some! What sudden respect did he feel for those who had willingly withdrawn from the witch-



ing region of such love as theirs had been ! Then came Milner's arguments to induce her to return ; then came into Cleveland's heart the full tide of resistance to unprincipled heresy—the zeal for the Church he served—the resolution to clasp tight hold of one whom his exertions hitherto had kept safe. The allusion to himself as “ the crafty and cruel,” gave him an opportunity of expressing some of his feelings. He folded the letter, and gave it back to her. She took it.

He said, “ I do not wonder that he is miserable. He might have spared me the epithets he has applied, I think. I do my duty ; and you are my witness that I have never, never, spoken of him but with friendly feelings. But I am content to suffer reproach. For your sake I would suffer any pain, any penalty to body or mind. Turn to me ; look at me ; speak to me once.”

There was something, to Helen, inexpressibly touching in Cleveland's voice and manner when he asked her to forgive him. He, the uncompromising priest to all the world beside, seemed to condescend to shew his gentler and more humane feelings to her alone—before her eyes, he sank into a sympathising and affectionate friend.

“ Ah ! Mr. Cleveland, I am so miserable—so lost ! ”

She turned her haggard face to him, and he became sensible what a wreck was before

him ; a soul torn, tossed with the passions of earth and the dread of losing Heaven. She continued to speak, now hurriedly, now slowly. The spasmodic convulsion of her throat gave her voice a sound of deep and most mournful depression. She tried to repress the rising sobs, the gushing tears, but her heart was full of her absent husband—of her lost love. She sat—her head drooping, her hair falling in disorder over her thin and worn face ; in one hand she held, clasped tight, the miniature she had been gazing at, until the fading light of the evening closed over her.

There was unutterable desolation in the form and countenance of Helen. Cleveland looked at her in silence ; he could neither speak nor move. She turned round to him, and clasping her hands, said,—

“ Would to God I had died before I saw him ! I wish—oh, I wish I had ! ”

Cleveland drew near ; he raised his voice, and spoke of spiritual comfort ; it was all he could do.

“ Great will be your reward, for ‘ great is your faith.’ You have sacrificed your most precious gifts ; and in the book of life those struggles, those sacrifices are inscribed. You have given up all—all, to follow Christ. Your name is written among those who have come through much tribulation, and are made perfect through suffering. God himself is your

guide, your great and eternal reward! You will join the number of the blessed, who shall come to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads. Oh, Helen! highly favoured are they to whom is given an opportunity to glorify the faith they hold, by their constancy and martyrdom; sufferings that must be lost in future glory: for it is 'a light affliction, that is but for a moment,' and the hour of peace must come. It must—it will—for the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings, and before the 'brightness of His coming' all clouds, all darkness shall fly. Take heart, then. The Lord keep you His indeed! May He lift up the light of His countenance upon you, and comfort you in His own good time. 'I have prayed for you, that your strength fail not:' and it will not; for the mighty and everlasting arms are around your immortal soul; and, wrapped in the love of the Eternal, none shall pluck you out of his hand!"

The words of Cleveland passed over the ear of his listener, as those of a physician who pronounces future life to one groaning in the agonies of apparent death. Yet she believed implicitly—raised her heart to God, and, in the feebleness of misery, implored the care and comfort of Heaven.

Cleveland retired, that night, to spend hours in prayer; watching, and thinking how he could alleviate the wretchedness he

had witnessed : any thing would he do, save weakly, wickedly give way. He looked on Milner's love as almost sacrilege : he *might* be well-intentioned. But Cleveland thought, with some disdain, of the easy life of Ellesmere vicarage—a sunny, comfortable home—a handsome wife—all the pleasures of a man of the world at the command of the owner. He turned, with proud complacency, to contemplate the priesthood of his own faith. How grand an army of apostles for the Church militant served her!—on the earth, not of it—set apart—mediators between the holiness above and the earthliness below,—the very visible type of the body of Christ still on earth. Such appeared his own Church to him that night. His heart was lifted up as he contemplated the place which he occupied in that great and magnificent procession of Christ's chosen soldiers ; the appointed chieftains over thousands and tens of thousands ! He gloried in the proud eminence on which they thus stood—followers of him to whom the dying Redeemer had confided the keys of life and death,—keepers—faithful guardians of the precious souls of men—

“ One army of the living God.”

To none might they give account but to their Lord at his coming. Through their spiritual power they were entitled to stand above all temporal and perishing supremacy ; it was

despicable to grasp greedily, but necessary to crush firmly.

The next morning he went early to speak to Mrs. Milner. He came in; he sat down beside her; he took the child in his arms, caressed it fondly, noticed its beauty, and its likeness to its father.

"Yes, thank God! she is like my dearest Cecil; and in a year and half I must part with her. After that I shall have nothing on earth to live for."

"You cannot tell," said Cleveland; "your husband may be reconciled to you long before that."

"Oh! no! no! He will never turn to me now!"

"You must not doubt the Lord's anxiety to convert."

"Convert!" said Mrs. Milner, passing her hand to and fro over her pale forehead; "Convert! Cecil is good."

"Yes; I know that he is so in intention; and there is the more reason to hope he will yet acknowledge the truth, or at least relax in his bigotry and intolerance," said Cleveland.

"Ah! Mr. Cleveland, he is not bigoted; he *was* not. Oh! if you *had* but known him—before—before. He is so kind, so gentle, so charitable. He acts up to the light he has."

"And turns obstinately from what he might have," replied Cleveland, hurriedly,

giving her the little girl, who had begun to recognise different faces, and had commenced the first coquetries of childhood, by smiling and crowing when pleased.

“ But, then, there comes a thought that, do you know, has been very often present with me of late. I am wrong even to think of it as possible. But we read, ‘ Every man shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God.’ Now Cecil has prayed for light ; he has received the light to live well ; and if he lives well, if he be sincere in his belief——”

“ St. Paul was sincere when he persecuted the first fruits of the Christian faith. The Jews were many of them sincere who crucified the Lord of Glory : ‘ We wot that through ignorance ye did it.’ The Israelites comprehended not the excellency of the one true way opened up by Christ. The same veil is yet stretched unrent over the eyes of the would-be-wise, who despise all mysteries as unworthy of their belief, and see not the consequences of their sin. Look at the schisms, the cruelty of the divisions, in the reformed faith. Is there to be found among them the unity of the body of Christ ? No, no ! Turn your eyes only to the light set before you ; listen not, parley not with the tempter. The tree of knowledge has been his bait, his too successful bait. Submit yourself as a child to the revealed will of God. In due time He will exalt you to the

perfect light, the glorious liberty, of his faithful and chosen children."

"Yes; I feel, indeed, the awful truth you speak," said Helen, slowly and thoughtfully. "But our faculty of thinking, reading, and judging——"

"Has been unlawfully used? The downfall of many of the best and brightest," said Cleveland. "I have never, I am sure, refused to read with you,—to explain——"

"But I am often alone—thoughts will rise. Now, Frances Trevelyan once——" She paused. It was betraying confidence. Cleveland listened, and then said,—

"Well!" There was something in that voice contemptuous and almost satirical; there is nothing which a writhing heart shrinks so fearfully from as ridicule. Rage rather than ridicule it will endure. She was silent. Cleveland rose, and said with a kind smile, "I must go now, and hope another time to hear what that young lady's candid convictions are."

Any approach to the ridiculous was so very rare in Cleveland's conversation and manner, that Helen shrank from it as from a something supernatural. It never amused her; it terrified alone; for there was much more of severity and satire in it than softness or subdued mirth. Milner had the joyousness of a boy at times; his heart was so open, so frank, though his manners always

retained the dignity that gave them half their charm. In Cecil's society Helen had felt her heart illuminated with the pleasures of a delightful and easy companionship. With Cleveland it was wound up to meet the demands of his. She was chilled, awed by the superior mind that sought command alone, not love; one which had seized first on hers,—had raised it, lighted it, glorified it, sanctified it to the service of God, as an altar prepared for eternal worship, here and hereafter. She felt that in yielding to a sudden whirlwind of passionate love she had forsaken a well-merited allegiance; she had forfeited the esteem of the great and high-hearted man who had blessed her early youth with his friendship and affectionate care.

The following week Cleveland told her, on a Tuesday, that on Thursday he proposed taking her to the sea-side. His mother had consented to go; it was to the same place they had once visited before.

"Now, now?" cried Helen. "Why?"

"Because it will do you good; because I wish to go," said Cleveland, rapidly.

"That is enough," she replied.

Cleveland left the room, saying, "I have written to your husband; I have told him we go to Milwood on Thursday, and have begged him to come there, if he pleases."

He had written to Milner, who flung his letter into the fire! "Heartless and un-



feeling man! he can parade before my eyes his insolent pride and disgraceful success."

A feeling of anger had by degrees arisen in the naturally hot heart of Cecil Milner towards his wife. Her weakness appeared to him unaccountable. He forgot the youth and childhood she had led. Secluded from every knowledge of the world, and of the truth; exposed to no influence but that of Cleveland, her friend and spiritual guide; with a mind straitened into the narrowest possible compass; a romantic and fervent heart; an excitable temperament united to an imagination of intense fire and much devotional feeling, which in woman is not unfrequently allied to superstition: all these feelings were so many weapons in the practised hand of Cleveland, who knew well the value of his personal influence, and used it with a success mysterious indeed in the eyes of Milner. He was accustomed to common-place, plain-spoken, well-meaning Protestant ladies; he knew not the wild turnings and desperate double-dealing of Helen's heart, divided between love—passion for himself—and adoring awe of Cleveland.

Yet that heart pined for him more wearily than ever. Cecil stood before her yearning affections arrayed in all the sunlight, the beauty of their past and perishing love,—

“ Life quenched in one ecstatic dream,  
The world a waste, before, behind !”

Hope flew now and then “ like a bird of gay plumage” to the window of a prisoner’s cell, and then deserted her, to leave her all the more wretched for the short flattery it had bestowed.

And so the days, weeks, and months had rolled on, and it was the end of October : six weary months ! They appeared ages to the wretched soul that had mourned in bitterness their slow flight. She often wrote letters to Cecil one day to burn them the next. He rarely, very rarely, wrote to her ! he had scarcely ever done so since the day of their separation, except to answer some direct appeal. A letter he felt would have been a delicious link in a *common* separation : in one like theirs it was useless agony either to write or receive. He was determined that the grief of his own soul should not interfere with his care of the souls of others ; he was only more earnest and unwearied in his sacred round of duties.

On the Thursday, Cleveland took his mother and Helen to Milwood ; they had the same house which they formerly occupied, while sojourning there previously to Helen’s marriage, and which was so near to the sea, that on stormy days the wild foam

flew up to the windows. The cottage was low-rented, for Cleveland had insisted on Helen's returning to her former entire dependence on him as her guardian. The money Milner had set apart for her he insisted on her returning to her husband. The latter wrote back a proud answer, refusing to receive it. Mr. Cleveland might, if he pleased, use it for her to whom it was willingly given ; if not, it might lie any where in safety. Milner had a small private fortune of his own : his mother had left him a few hundreds a-year.

Helen had taken of the sum one hundred a-year ; she insisted on Cleveland appropriating it to his own use. He distributed it among the poor. She found out this, and felt that his kindness and generosity were unchanged.

Mrs. Cleveland, apathetic and silent, let things go on as Cleveland chose. If she worshipped any thing, it was her son ; and he was always kind and thoughtful where her comforts were concerned.

He had no charge elsewhere to keep him away from home : for the first time in the course of years he had a home independent of other ties. It was a strange mixture his life then, of a dreamy, melancholy musing, and a bewildering anxiety for the fate of one who was twined through every thought of his heart,—his occupation by day, his dream

by night,—the burden of his prayers, the very centre of his soul's warmest and gentlest affections.

Many might have wondered what there was to interest so deeply in Helen Milner. As to looks, Cleveland was one on whom mere beauty made not the smallest impression ; though no one was more alive to the natural fascination and grace that proceed from simplicity, elegance, and poetic feeling. Of the latter, Helen's heart and mind were principally composed : unconsciously to herself, it threw over every movement, every word, every look, every thought, the romantic interest which makes the eye wander for ever in search of that which exercises a stronger spell over the imagination than the beauty that merely courts the admiration of the outward sense, and not the secret worship of the spirit.

In mind she was a strange mixture. Totally unaccomplished, totally unversed in the pleasant small ways of this world, she stood within Cleveland's eyes the type of lovely, unadorned nature ; though in that pure and simple character, Cleveland could still recognise the deep devotion, the miraculous, reverential awe he had himself engraven upon it in indelible types.

He felt sure that they were bound to each other by ties not of this earth — an union to be hereafter made perfect and happy in Hea-

ven—and he would hold the precious treasure he had bought with his own exertion, his own persevering love: she should not fall; he would rather gaze upon her dead before his face than know her to be again the contented, converted wife of Milner.

Yes, round her clung all the interests of life for him, and of hope beyond it: he had wandered long over a dismal tract of hard duty, and here, on enchanted ground, stood the home of his middle age, adorned with the hopes, the tender ties of youth, which he had never known before. He did not dare look beyond the limited horizon of the present. Now she was safe. He devoted his whole life to make her, at least, more contented; and so the days rolled over the head of Cleveland.

Helen Milner acknowledged his affectionate care; she struggled with all her soul to hide her misery from those anxious eyes that wistfully and mournfully wandered over her pale and disquieted countenance.

She always indulged in one saunter by the sea-side alone — precious hours of solitude to the worn and feverish heart! Then, then she lived once more in the presence of her adored Cecil. At such hours, in silent communion, her spirit flew to the spot where he was: she met him, unfettered by the presence of Cleveland: she spoke to

him ; she spoke to him as if they had suddenly met in another world, far from that in which she was compelled to shun his beloved presence.

One evening, she had wandered down to the shore : it was nearly half-past four on a November evening ; but the weather was mild, soft, and grey ; a westerly breeze blew over the leaden-coloured sea ; the twilight was closing ; and there was all around her that unutterable melancholy which soothes from its own excess of mournfulness.

She stood alone, and, according to her custom, took from her breast the picture that was the only star of her dreary existence. Yet sometimes she felt dissatisfied with its calm beauty. She would gaze through her tears till the face grew strange and cold ; she looked forward to that hour of solitude as to an appointed meeting, and sometimes her own heart played her false, and she found a dull gloom where she had anticipated the renewed raptures of memory and love. This dim autumn afternoon she took the miniature from its resting-place ; and, touching the spring, it flew open. The suddenness of being even by such means brought into the visible presence of lineaments which were never absent from her soul, gave her, as it were, command over a spell which she religiously guarded from all human influence,—besides even Cleveland

being kept in ignorance that the picture existed. She looked—

“Upon the lips the smile—the very smile—  
Remembered well the sunlight of her youth.”

The reality of his presence flashed with a dread joy through her head and heart: the barriers of time and space seemed to fall down before her wild anxiety. She clasped her brow with a sudden sense that madness was hovering above her brain; and at that instant she heard Cleveland's voice beside her. She turned round, not knowing what she did, and being startled by his unexpected presence, shrieked in a tone that horrified him like the scream of the dying. He caught hold of her hands, and implored her in the name of Heaven to be quiet. She hung down her head and wept in silence: in her hand was the picture open. Cleveland led her towards the house.

“Not there! not there! Mr. Cleveland! Do not force me there—I cannot breathe—here—here in the wind, in the open air—by the sea.” She turned round, and moved towards the shore. The tide was coming up. The great waves were rising and bursting at her feet with the rushing and mighty roar she loved to listen to.

Cleveland followed her. He took her arm: he held her burning hands; and at last she sat down on a mass of stones. She

laid her wretched head on her arms, which were crossed over her knees, and sat without seeming to notice that Cleveland was near.

He could not speak; his voice was choked; and what could he say? At last he roused her.

"It is getting late — chill, very chill — and see, the next wave will reach you — the wind blows from the sea to-night."

She looked up: he took courage.

"What has so alarmed you?"

"Myself!" she said, grasping the hair from her damp brow.

"Calm yourself," said Cleveland, softly.

She looked in his face; the mute answer was one of intolerable pain.

"Look here!" she said, in a few minutes; "you have never seen this before. Look at what I lose — at what I have lost. Great Lord! have mercy on thy crushed and sinful creature!" She put the miniature into his hand, and he closed it instantly. He did not return it immediately. "Give it to me!" she cried, with sudden fierceness. "It is mine! Heaven itself shall not rob me of this!"

"Hush!" said Cleveland, "you must not excite yourself — it is wrong."

She answered with a laugh.

"My God!" cried Cleveland. There was a pause: the wind and the sea filled the interval with a dull and dismal murmur in



his ear — to her, the nerves of whose brain were over-excited, both appeared to shriek in tones of unnatural loudness; and yet she would not move away.

“You have been madly exciting yourself to-night,” said Cleveland, gently, but reproachfully. He wished to divert her sorrow even into anger, for anger always ended in penitent tears. “You will repent it some day. No one has a right to over-tax his own sensibilities; they are not given for selfish indulgence. I shall not give you this back just now.”

She turned round in an instant; with unlooked-for strength, she tore it violently from his hand, and flung it far into the sea.

“Is this conduct worthy of you?” said Cleveland. “Come this instant with me!” He drew her forcibly along for some little distance: then she resolutely stopped.

“Mr. Cleveland, listen to me!” She was panting with repressed sobs of grief and unnatural rage. “Lost or saved, I will go back to my home, my husband, if, indeed, he will yet receive me. I will, I will see him again!”

“You shall! you shall!” said Cleveland: “be pacified; come to the house.”

“Do not try to detain me; my heart and my reason will hold together no longer; I will give up all — life eternal — Heaven — for Cecil — for Cecil — you tyrant!”

She was half mad by the time she pronounced the awful word: it fell on Cleveland's heart, and crushed all anger, all bitterness, with the overwhelming misery it aroused there. She had hardly strength to get to her room—spoke no more—and Cleveland sent immediately for assistance. The doctor from the neighbouring town arrived. He found her not alarmingly ill, only over-excited and weak. At her door stood the trembling Cleveland, silent, but praying in his heart for her safety. She fell asleep. The woman who was watching her left the room, to call another to relieve her, as she had been sitting up all night. Cleveland was in the neighbouring room, with the door open. He instantly went out.

“Is she asleep?” he said.

He spoke in a whisper, but the voice of Helen answered,—

“Come here to me. I want to speak to you.”

He entered the room, and stood beside her. He looked at her and fell down on his knees. He imagined that she wished him to pray for her.

“Not that, it is not for that, dear Mr. Cleveland. I hope you will forgive me this once, this once; and now that I am really ill, very ill, you *must* let me see Cecil. He will come. Oh, I know he will come. Write to him to-night. When could he be here? Tell

him I desire his presence as the last favour I can implore from the mercy of God. Write to him—write to him—dear Mr. Cleveland. I have been reading here, lately alone, and though I know I *may* be misled, still there are some bright broad lights that burst upon me. At times I can hardly tell how. But surely faith is a simple thing. My misery of late has made me think only of Christ *himself*, somehow—not of the great wide Church, which does not concern *me* I feel almost sometimes.”

She talked with odd simplicity, like a frightened child.

Cleveland’s eye was upon her. The moment was come to lose all or gain all; any thing rather than defeat. He rose up.

“Do you believe, indeed, in Christ? then are you safe; for you die in communion with Him and His most holy Church. But faint not at the eleventh hour.”

“Send for my husband,” she answered.

“For what purpose?” said Cleveland.

“Send for him to-day,” she replied.

“Dear Helen, why?” said Cleveland, in a tone of deepest earnestness. “Not to meddle with the soul saved, cleansed, by another and purer faith than his?”

“Send for him,” persisted Helen, turning away her head. “Tell him to come.”

Cleveland left the room; he was confused, agitated beyond measure. More suddenly

than he expected the hour of trial was come. It was now all or nothing. Milner should *not* come. She was in no danger; the doctor had assured him she was not. He had promised to come next day, and see her about noon.

Milner should not come just now to agitate and confuse her. Cleveland felt it a most sacred duty to prevent their meeting immediately—to have that soul snatched out of his hand. It was worse than great weakness.

“Strengthen me, O Lord, my God,” he said, “to fulfil this most dreadful duty. She shall not be plucked from Thy hand! I will stand between her and her destroyer. Here he shall not come, and in ten days she will thank me for my prudence and well-meant refusal.”

When he saw Helen again it was soon after daylight. She had sent for him again.

“Mr. Cleveland, you have written?”

“Tell me for what purpose first,” replied he.

“To see him once more—to see his precious, kind face once more.”

“You are in no danger,” said Cleveland, kindly.

“You cannot tell—you are not in all the secrets of the Almighty,” replied Helen.

“Oh, Mr. Cleveland! I shall be hereafter either for you additional glory —— or ——” She paused.

“What?” said Cleveland, most solemnly, looking in her face.

"Your victim and your condemnation," she said, clasping her hands over her eyes, as if to exclude the sight of him.

"I will take the risk," said Cleveland.

"You will? You take your oath? You have never deceived me?"

"Deceived you!" he cried, with horror.

"I—your guide through life!"

"Yes, Mr. Cleveland; but you cannot go with me through death."

"I then consign you to the everlasting hand that will never let you go. I assume the responsibility that—that your earthly love—your husband could never dare to do."

She groaned as he said the words. There was a long silence. Light and darkness struggled in her soul, she imagined, at that instant. It was soon after daybreak, then. She drew back the curtain,—

"See, the light is come! Oh, Mr. Cleveland, what a type is the morning!"

He felt there was much meaning in these words. He feared she knew not what.

"Helen, let us pray for the real light from above. Listen to me. You stand, I see, on the brink of an abyss. I command you to turn your eyes from the dizzy height. Trust in me—I take upon myself the whole responsibility of your safety. *That* I defy your husband to do. He dares not—he dares not aspire to what he pretends to possess. I—

here beside you now at the solemn hour of death—promise you eternal life, in the name of God. Stay in the faithful bosom of the Church that has sheltered you, that has brought you thus far on in your duty.”

“My duty! I have forsaken my husband. I have deserted my post at his side,” she said, feebly.

“Your post was *never* at his side,” said Cleveland. “You have nobly fulfilled your duty, I tell you. You have forsaken all to follow Christ.”

“I hope He will acknowledge me.”

“You have loved much, and you will be forgiven. You stand crowned and blessed already.”

“Well, well,” she said, “you will write to-day?”

Cleveland paused. “No, I will *not*.”

She rose with almost a howl of anguish from her pillow.

“You will not—you will not—you *will* not send?”

“No,” said Cleveland. “Now I will not. You are not dying, you will recover. Ten days hence you will thank me for having held you safe. When you are strengthened again, he may come. Before that I will not send.”

He left the room; he heeded not the cries, the tears. He went away and stayed away till noon. The doctor came; Cleveland ac-

accompanied him to the door, and waited for him there. He waited and heard the tones of the voice that spoke now nothing but fear and anguish to his soul. She must not fall away at the eleventh hour. He would attempt any thing, every thing, rather than allow her to fall away now.

The physician said she was better, not dangerously ill, but advised that she should be kept quite quiet.

Cleveland replied frankly,—“ There was one thing he was afraid would disquiet her, and that was seeing some of her family; she was in unhappy circumstances.” He begged Doctor Bartlett would not send or take any letters just now.

The Doctor looked puzzled for a moment, and then drew out one. It was one which she had written herself to Cecil.

Cleveland took it, and said calmly, “ Oh, yes, I knew that; this must not go.” And he tore it in several pieces. He begged to have another visit next day.

“ And if she asks me about her letter, what am I to say?” inquired the doctor, as he mounted his horse.

“ By to-morrow she will have changed her mind,” said Cleveland. He went not near Helen for several hours, she wondered she did not hear his voice; she felt her shaken nerves fail her sadly as night came on, still she was better, much better.

At nine, Cleveland came to her room—she was lying on the sofa wrapped up in the fur cloak she had worn months before at Cotesbrooke. A candle burned on the table near—she was reading. Cleveland came in, and sat down; there was awful solemnity in his manner. She trembled in spite of herself.

“What are you reading?” said Cleveland.

“My Bible,” she said, firmly.

“Lay it down—listen to me;” she obeyed.

“Now listen! I come, in mercy to your perishing soul,—once before I spoke in your ears the approaching thunders of the Almighty—they are now rolling over your guilty head. I conjure you to listen by the price paid for your salvation,—by the bliss of heaven you love—by the pains of hell you deserve! Believe and live—die and be condemned. Turn not your thoughts to earth, and earthly things. Remain faithful—pledge your soul to me. I pledge mine on your safety! I tell you danger, death, and hell lurk in your wild unholy longings for your husband’s love—approach not the altar with an unclean and depraved heart! Once more, I entreat you to listen to me. If you send for *him*, I retire, I leave you—I will not give you the last sacrament—the final blessing—before your soul quits the earth. I tell you, I swear to you solemnly—I, who never deceived you—that dying thus you



die without hope ! No other help can reach you. I have spoken—I have done.”

She raised up her hand for an instant, as if to speak—and then fainted. When she came to herself, Cleveland was not there—she looked wildly round—“Call him back—call him quickly—call Mr. Cleveland !”

He came, and every one was sent away. It was by this time nearly twelve o'clock. He remained with her an hour. In that most solemn interview he received her promise never to send for Milner till he gave her full leave. She laid her soul in his hands—her heart bare before his eyes—her hopes at his feet—by every sacred name she promised to cling to her vows of belief—in him, in him alone, as the revealer of the will of God concerning her, as the minister of the only saving Church. She confessed, received full absolution, and with confidence—with the trustfulness of a true disciple she put her life, her fate, her hopes for this world and the next, again into the hands of Cleveland—if, indeed, they had ever been withdrawn.

“The hour of the powers of darkness has passed, and, thank God ! has left you safe. But beware !” said Cleveland, as he left her for the night, “‘watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation.’”

The next morning he found she had written a letter to Milner, forbidding him to

come just then. He tore it before her, saying, "he had known her heart better than she did herself, and had not allowed her first one to go."

She shewed no symptoms of surprise, or displeasure, or relief: she rose that day—came down stairs—said she was better—and tried to read. Cleveland watched her; her eyes rested on the book before her, but she was not reading. He spoke to her—she answered correctly—but in a peculiar manner that sometimes almost alarmed him—still she was better. At the end of the week she was again comparatively well. Cleveland one evening brought her child, now a beautiful little creature, and put it down beside her. She looked at it—tears came over her face—she wiped them away, and sat quite silent. Cleveland came and sat down near her.

"How lovely the little thing is looking!"

He took it in his arms; he had become so attached to it, it knew him already, and he frequently noticed it for hours when it was in the room with them. Cecil's name had not been mentioned by her for some days. Cleveland said,—

"How like its father! is it not?"

She looked round, and said,—

"You shall not speak of him—of Cecil; it is all over."

“What do you mean?” said Cleveland.

She remained silent, and soon left the room.

Several days passed on; she never went out alone, Cleveland never left her. She was apparently very grateful for his kindness, and he had only to speak to be obeyed.

The end of December approached; and, for the last three weeks, a visible and distressing change had fallen over Helen; she appeared to be failing, fading; she looked wretchedly ill, but never complained, and was very quiet. It was the sudden lull that frightened Cleveland. He sent for a physician, the first in London; he came down on the Christmas Eve. He saw Mrs. Milner, she answered all his questions calmly: she was in a very delicate, but not a dangerous state; still he would advise returning to London; and then soon after, if they could go towards the south of Europe, it would do her good.

“She shall certainly go,” said Cleveland.

“You are her guardian, I think? Is she a widow?”

“No,” replied Cleveland.

“Her state is not dangerous,” said the physician he had consulted, “but change, I am sure, would do her good; to the south of France or Italy.” So he took his leave.

The idea of leaving England with her had often of late crossed Cleveland’s mind: where

could she be so safe as with him? To return to Milner was certain loss; he must hold her to the death, or all his work was vain. He gloried in his uncompromising firmness, he would be as unshaken as Milner. They might go abroad—to Paris even, first: he had never loved England; with the lands of Italy and France he was well acquainted: there they would go, and she would revive. He would take her: in some distant and lovely home she should yet revive. A vague hope of being able even yet to re-unite her and Milner always accompanied Cleveland's plans; he wished to be their good angel some day or other:—in the mean time they must remain apart.

He told Helen they were to return to London immediately, and also communicated to her the opinion of the physician concerning her. They were perhaps to go abroad.

“Abroad! beyond the sea?”

“To France, to Italy, any where you please,” said Cleveland; “a mild climate will do you good; and, you know, you often said long ago you would like to go abroad with me. Your husband, you know, could not go at present; probably it would be the thing he would like you best to do: at least, when he knows you really require it.”

“My husband!” was all she said.

“We shall return to London to-morrow, or next day. We shall go, in ten days,

abroad — by Paris first ; that journey will be easiest for you and my mother."

"She is not going?"

"Yes," said Cleveland, "she probably will ; the change would enliven her : she is able—quite able—for it."

"I will not go abroad, Mr. Cleveland," said Helen, suddenly.

"You *will* not!—why?" he replied, quickly.

"I tell you I will not, I cannot, leave England."

"You will return in much better health, in a year's time. I promise you, you shall return."

"Indeed!" she answered, vacantly.

"In a twelvemonth," said Cleveland, "you will be, I trust and pray, much stronger. I will do all I can for you ; you shall want nothing ; you shall go where you please, do what you choose — only come. It is necessary — it is for your own good. I have not a thought separate from your interests." She remained silent. He rose, saying, "At any rate, we leave this the day after to-morrow ; that is fixed."

The day before their departure was a fine, bright one. She expressed a restless longing for the open air ; she was strong enough, quite, to walk ; her strength was less impaired than might have been expected from her looks. Cleveland had gone to the neighbouring town, to the bank, for money. They

had left Hardy in London, and they never had many attendants ; their life was scrupulously simple and unexpensive.

That day—the 27th of December—she told her child's attendant to walk with her alone, leaving the child, who was then taking its usual sleep, in the care of another woman.

Martin obeyed her orders, and they left the house together. They walked on quickly, and drew near the lodge-gate of Mr. Elmore's grounds.

The family were abroad, she knew ; she wished to go up to the house. She stood before the entrance, where, two years and a half ago, she had suddenly seen Cecil Milner. He stood there beneath those trees, bare and leafless now, then covered with the young leaves and blossoms of the lilac and laburnum. She slowly ascended the winding road, strewn with withered leaves. Round the house, which was a low, Italian-looking building, ran a verandah ; some creeping plants festooned around the green trellice-work ; amongst the damp, withered flowers at the foot of the slight pillars, grew some Christmas roses ; she pulled three, and then wandered through the evergreen walks. She felt a superstitious veneration for every turn, every shrub, every tree. She was as a pilgrim wandering round a deserted shrine. Here he had been, when he loved her in

secret ; down that avenue he had come the day she saw him, as in a sudden vision. She followed every imaginary step of his, and yet she did not weep — her tears were dried up ; all was so silent, so chill, so awfully deserted ; not a foot was moving apparently near them, but their own, which fell almost mutely on the soft, damp grassy banks over which they went on their return to the avenue.

They went home. Helen clung faintly to the arm of her attendant, and they were met near the house by Cleveland. Martin was dismissed.

“Where have you been ?” he said, giving her his arm.

“To the house on the hill there,” she answered, without looking at him.

They walked for ten minutes on the beach. She said she was very tired, and would go in.

Before she did so, Cleveland said, —

“I am now going to return you what you once threw away.”

He laid in her hand her husband’s picture ; it had been saved by Cleveland when she went into the house. It was in the sand, not far from where they had stood speaking.

“Thank you, you are very kind !” she said ; and taking it quietly she went home.

Next day they left Milwood. She leaned

out of the carriage-window, and threw her eyes once more over the wide sea, which lay stretched out far and near in dazzling sun-light, for the day was bright and clear.

The first and last view of the sea, when meeting or parting, after or for a long time, is a feeling distinct from all other enjoyments of Nature's beauty. The sea possesses the charm, the change, the variety, the voice of a living being; for it speaks, it soothes, it awes, it rouses; in storm, in sunshine, in calm, in uproar, equally majestic, equally satisfying; like a friend that never disappoints the heart or the imagination.

They reached London. It was late and dark; snow was falling in great flakes as they rolled through the square leading to their home. Unutterably dismal and depressing did the dim lamp-lit streets appear. They passed the Trevelyans' house; it was shut up, they were out of town.

Cleveland noticed it aloud. His voice broke a long silence, and they arrived at their own door as he spoke.

Mrs. Cleveland soon went to her own room. Helen was left a short time with Cleveland. He spoke to her with tender gentleness.

"How are you? — you are not very tired, I hope?"

"Oh, no! I shall be better to-morrow."



"I shall wish you to see ——— to-morrow," mentioning one of the great and most celebrated physicians in London.

"Oh, no more doctors now!" she replied, rising. "I tell you I am better."

"Well, but I wish it; and in a fortnight you will be in a milder climate: this is an uncommonly severe season."

"It is very cold," she answered, and went up stairs, after wishing him good night.

Next day the gentleman he had mentioned came. He saw her about noon, gave the same opinion, and recommended change. Cleveland told him she had been for some time in trying circumstances.

"Mrs. Milner is a widow?"

"No," replied Cleveland. "But that is not the only misfortune to befall one."

"Ah, very true!"

The doctor left them; Cleveland returned to the room, where she still sat.

"You see all are agreed. It is better you should go with me, your tried, and I hope trusted, friend."

"Yes, Mr. Cleveland, you are both. I am very grateful for all you have done."

She left him alone. Cleveland went out half-an-hour afterwards. Mrs. Milner came down, wandered up and down the room where Mrs. Cleveland was, and spoke to her a little. She seemed trying to rouse

herself, and at last put on her things, and went out to walk to and fro before the doors, as she did sometimes.

Cleveland found her returned when he came home; they spent the evening, the latter part, alone. He read to her. He chose that passage in Saint Matthew, so touchingly illustrative of the Redeemer's love to weak believers, where the trembling disciple is sinking on the waters he had dared to brave, in the full confidence of faith at first, and the imploring cry, "Lord, save me!" is immediately replied to by the Saving Hand and Almighty Voice. Cleveland sat with the half-closed book in one hand; with the other he enforced his words by laying it on the thin and feverish wrist of his listener.

"Such has been your case; but, praised be God, that same Almighty hand has held you fast, and none shall pluck you out of your Father's hand. His voice addresses you, 'Lo! I am with you alway.'"

She bowed her head in silence: then said, as if to herself,—

"Always! — for ever! — for ever! — or never! — never! — oh, glorious hope, or endless woe!" She turned and said, in a low but decided voice, "Tell me one thing to-night — you must, you ought — are those safe in Christ's love who stand by that love alone?"

"All the Church of Christ are safe," said Cleveland. "Trusting, they are safe."

"I speak not of the *Church*," she said. "No, no, I speak of a single soul; that is enough for me to know."

"God adds to the Church such as shall be saved," replied Cleveland, solemnly.

"And those without the visible pale?" she asked, as if life and death hung on his lips.

"I do not pronounce judgment; *your* business is to make your election sure."

"You evade your answer. I charge you, answer me — the truth — the whole truth, Mr. Cleveland."

"Strive *you* to enter in at the strait gate?" he replied.

"I do—I have—entered in: but answer me plainly as a man, as an honest and faithful friend."

He repeated once more, in her hearing, the words he had never before, but once, addressed particularly to any question of hers.

"Those who believe and are baptized shall be saved. He who believeth not shall be damned!"

She put her hands up to her eyes, as if the very words had blazed upon her sight.

She rose up without speaking, and moved towards the door. Cleveland followed her.

He gave her a light, and, shaking hands, they parted.

It was about eleven o'clock. She was alone in her room; her heart, her head, in wild confusion—despair—death in her soul. The past, the present, the future, the hopeless and fathomless future, most of all enveloped her mind in miserable darkness. She felt as if she stood in a vast chamber, blindfolded: she could not discover its limits, nor, with chained hands, restore her bandaged sight to freedom.

Cecil—the golden days of their life of love—their cruel separation—the danger of his immortal soul; Cleveland—the chains where-with he had bound her in the name of God, filled her agonised thoughts. The hopeless slave of heaven she called herself—heaven, without the wish to attain it, she could never have—heaven without Cecil she did not wish to have—heaven, from which a mystical caprice excluded a faithful believer in its Lord. Prayer was vain; the very affection that sent it from her lips was an offence, and an aggravation of her sin and ingratitude. She wandered up and down distracted. Once she heard the faint cry of her child waking in the night; but her very mother's heart was numbed: she was paralysed by the horror and darkness that encompassed her sinking soul.

The next morning the servant entered her

room; the window was half open, a chair stood near it, as if she had sat there for air. Some torn papers were on the table, and her husband's picture. Every thing was in the same place as usual. The woman shut the window, for the morning air was sharp and piercing; the snow had ceased, the sun was shining. She found that her mistress was still, and asleep. She looked out, and watched the work of Mrs. Trevelyan's servants over the way; they were opening the shutters and preparing the house, for the family were to return that evening to London. She left the room, and in half an hour returned again. Was she to bring up breakfast? Mr. Cleveland was dressed, and waiting in the dining-room. She drew near, and looked. With a shriek of horror, she alarmed the servants in the neighbouring room. Mr. Cleveland was on the stairs, and came up; in the confusion, he could get no immediate answer, and so walked in. In an instant he saw the awful truth; that face—those hands! He fainted with the sudden anguish and horror of his heart. When he recovered, he was in his own chamber; but he instantly returned to the one where the dead body lay—now straightened—the eyes closed—the jaw bound up. He sent every one away; he searched the room; a horrible suspicion had dawned upon him, and he could have cursed himself because it never occurred to him

till now. She ought not to have been left alone. He found, half destroyed, in the fire-place, the remains of a laudanum phial. He knew she had once had occasion for the drug; but it was long before, and he had forgotten it.

The coroner's inquest could not decide whether she had caused her own death wilfully, or by a mistake in the quantity of laudanum she had taken. On Cleveland's soul there sat a heavy horror, for his conscience told him he had pushed his power to its very uttermost point.

And now Milner was to be told! and he must bear the burden of the tidings; he must meet the bereaved one. He would go himself. Cleveland would not shrink at this, the eleventh hour, indeed. She had died a faithful member of the Church, and the shadow of the Church's wings should be spread over the grave of a true disciple. The torn papers on her table Cleveland examined. She had burnt some; from the scorched fragments on the hearth this was apparent.

It was strange that no line for Cecil had been left: if she had destroyed it herself, Cleveland thanked God that he might honestly say so.

He collected all the little articles which he imagined that her husband would desire

to possess. He inclosed in one packet the miniature, the wedding-ring, the guard which Milner had given her, and her English prayer-book; some faded Christmas roses were lying between two leaves; they were placed at the service for the burial of the dead.

Cleveland kept the mass-book she had lately used, and the golden cross he had given her long before her marriage: these were his own.

He left London at three o'clock on the 30th of December, and reached Ellesmere at ten the following night. He travelled as quickly as he could, but the roads were heavy with the snow that had lately fallen.

He went immediately to Milner's door,—he stood there once more in the clear starlight, but the scene was changed. Shrouded in snow, all around him appeared in spectral stillness. The place appeared the skeleton of its former self, with bare, leafless branches, and barren garden.

He rang, and was admitted. For the first time in his life Cleveland felt fear at encountering the mighty weight of another's agony. Not called to soothe—to bless—to pray—he had come to smite a crushed heart—to fill the cup of bitterness to overflowing.

“Would to God I had died before this hour!—would to Heaven I had died for her!”

he thought, as he went into Milner's presence. He stood at the door of the room, and Milner rose.

"You here?"

"Yes," said Cleveland, "I am come,—I am come to break to you what a few hours must send to you by other messengers."

"My God, she is not dead?" said Milner, starting forward as if he had been shot.

Cleveland clasped his hands in a solemn silence,—a silence the most awful answer to the most awful question. There was nothing to tell; hope and fear might sleep, as far as this life was concerned.

Milner buried his face in his hands, and for a moment there was perfect silence. The first words he spoke were,—“Go, I must be alone.” Cleveland stayed still. “Go,” repeated Milner,—“I order you to go!”

Cleveland laid down on the table the parcel he had brought, saying, “They are yours now,” and left the room. He returned to the village inn, and waited for another summons to see Milner again. He did not mean to fly his presence: Milner should know every thing—he was entitled to every consideration.

And Milner, left alone, opened the small packet. Not a word—not a line from the dead! These chill memorials alone,—they were a mockery to his agony. He did not

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value them. She must have withdrawn her love from him. She! the tender—the true—the passionate—had departed from him, without one spark of memory to light his way—without one word of the affection that had once been all his, to disappear—to vanish into the unseen world, leaving him forgotten—unnoticed—despairing behind her. Could this be real? Cleveland had done it all: he had torn that love rudely from the fond heart where it had taken deep root,—body, heart, and soul. He had ruthlessly and cruelly wrenched her from the loving arms of her chosen and rightful possessor; and the vengeance of God yet slept. Cleveland believed himself a faithful disciple of a just and merciful master!

Insulted had been his love to the day of her death. To the very brink of her early grave Cleveland had led her—a willing captive. Forgotten—betrayed—forsaken—how, in the name of God, could he forgive?—except through the strength of One “who makes all things possible.”

At two o'clock the following day Cleveland was sent for by Milner:—the request he felt as a command. Milner was in the same room: his changed face brought tears from the heart of Cleveland, but sympathy would have been insult. Milner spoke: his voice was toneless, and his deep eyes were encircled by a dark rim of repressed tears.

He looked full of ghastly composure, and spoke quite collectedly.

"Tell me, where did she die?—what was the cause? Was it sudden illness?"

"I cannot—I dare not tell!" said Cleveland.

"You *dare not!* ah!" The suspicion of the truth passed over his mind, and shook it with the last horror. "Then she was insane!"

"If she destroyed herself she was, but no one can know. She was known to have the drug, and had been left alone."

"God of Heaven!—alone—maddened—and I not there!"

"I had no idea of any——" began Cleveland. Milner raised his hand imploringly, as if to stop him. Cleveland submitted.

"And she left no line—no word—nothing—nothing for me?"

"Nothing!" said Cleveland.

"And for weeks she never asked to see me?"

"She did, once!" said Cleveland. "I confess—I refused it."

Milner bowed his head in silence, and said—"Well! the miserable must forgive."

Cleveland felt at that moment as if he could have worshipped the possessor of such humility and matchless meekness. But he dared not speak, or move. He was awestruck, as one who stands before an angel

and receives from the semblance of mortal lips the very words of God direct from on high.

Milner only said after that, "You may go ; I set out for London in an hour. She will be buried here — this will be her resting-place till that great day when we shall give account of our works to God."

They both left Ellesmere that afternoon, at different hours. Milner reached London first. He demanded instant admittance : he found Frances Trevelyan had watched beside the dead. With prayers and tears they met in the room where she lay. Milner, for a short space, gave vent to the natural grief of a vehement spirit. He laid his head on her pillow—he clasped the chill hands—he showered his hot tears over the precious and innocent face, for in death it had resumed its sweet and extreme youthfulness of look and expression. He cut off the brown hair, and kept one braid for her only friend Frances Trevelyan. Then Milner knelt down : he prayed for strength to forgive. He devoted himself to the service of God in heart and soul. He implored the Lord to pacify, not silence his grief—and prayed for the preservation of his only child. He had something to live for still. His was not the morbid sorrow that thinks a comfort left—a crime to the dear and the lost.

Cleveland represented that the services of his Church must hallow her grave.

Milner consented. She had died in communion with that Church; it was just.

"It shall be so," he said to Cleveland. "Forms are of no moment to one beyond them now."

"It is the last act of outward faith," said Cleveland, mournfully.

"Yes," replied Milner; "and you shall perform it."

And he did. She was not buried at Ellesmere. She lies in the Catholic burial-ground, where Cleveland laid her in the earth—whether "in the full hope of a glorious resurrection," no one ever knew, for Cleveland never spoke of her to any living soul after he had named her for the last time on her funeral day.

Milner went home to Ellesmere, with his little girl. His grief was deeper than man can tell. Only God can know how much he had to overcome in the full forgiveness which he granted.

The child grew up, lovely, and gentle, and intelligent—the happy sounds of light footsteps and childish laughter rang through the deserted house of Milner. He led a life, devoted, indeed, to the glory of God and the good of man. The happy life of one

"Who in life's distant even  
Shall shine serenely bright,  
As in the autumnal Heaven  
Mild rainbow tints at night."

But his lost love—the treasure of his memory—was never replaced by another. There were moments when the dark cloud that rested over her last hour on earth poured bitterness on his heart; and in that faithful heart the adored image remained, the more fondly cherished from the mystery that shrouded its untimely loss.

For two months Cleveland remained in England. At the end of February, Mrs. Cleveland died rather unexpectedly. He laid her in the grave, and then sold their house and went abroad. Not in Europe did he wish to stay. He longed to carry the word of God to a newer and wilder region. He went to North America. There, in the New World, he felt freer of the harassing forms he could no longer endure. He went alone, unfettered, away to the settlements in the Far West, and for two years he worked amongst the careless and the unconverted. He fought for two years still bravely under the banners of the faith for which he had sacrificed all.

He lived in a wild part of the country. He was loved—looked up to by all around. There he is still remembered and highly revered for his holiness and earnest love of souls.

He went one summer along the course of one of the great American rivers. He went to preach—to call all hearers to the true fold

of Christ. One evening he wandered to the river's edge ; the wide and magnificent water was still as a mirror—the woods were lying in the sweet silence and richly varied hues of an American summer's night ; not a sound was in the air ; the solemn stillness stole with intense mournfulness over the once haughty, unbending heart of Cleveland. He had tried to banish the thought of the past to a certain point—more than that he could not do. But he hardly allowed himself any rest by day, and little by night. To be up and doing was now his only desire.

But that night, as he stood on the bank of that glorious river, he felt arrested for a while as by an arm of iron—to pause—to look back on the irreparable past. His thoughts flew over the sea to days—to years gone by,—at that moment feeling like one who is drawn aside for a short space from the stream of life, and in thought compelled to view, with an eye suddenly cooled from a ruling passion, the deeds, the connected doings of a succession of past years—then Cleveland became conscious his faith for an instant wavered. The ground on which he stood seemed to shake—there, in the wide wilderness, he was alone with God. Faith seemed to be the one small thread that united the single soul to a single Saviour. The Church appeared at a distance a com-

plicated machine—not infallible—not invariable in its workings.

“Yet am I right,” thought Cleveland; “this solitude has unnerved me. I have gained all, or lost all. Just God strengthen me! Yet am I Thine!”

He prayed—his heart was softened by the warm memories of his first youth—of his native land. To his own surprise he thought, with a sudden melting love, of distant England, and of the old property of Cleveland, where he had spent his boyhood. Then he thought of later years—of another home; but there sat a spectre—upbraiding him with her lost love—her murdered hope—and most mournful death.

“Yet was I right,” again he thought. “It is a temptation to look back from the true path. I was right!”

Two days after, Cleveland was seized with the fever that ended fatally.

In the humble home of an Irish labourer Cleveland died. With his dying hands he burnt the only relics of the only affection that had ever shone on his lonely and loveless life. The torn papers he had kept, for there were some words still to be traced as part of a letter addressed to himself, but destroyed by an after-thought of the unhappy writer, he himself committed to the flames.

The Book of Prayer, inscribed by him with the name of Helen Mortimer, he destroyed also. Careless hands should not profane those leaves. Weak, trembling in the last agonies, Cleveland raised his dying voice : his words were,—

“I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith!”

He died. He was buried near the river's brink. A cross, rudely cut, is placed above that mound, which is grass-grown now, and “refreshed with faithful dews.” Beside it roll the waters ; above, the forest winds sing mournful music through the dark pines that overshadow the lonely spot of Cleveland's rest !

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